

Numbers 32:1-42 **Division of Land of Gilead**

Request to inherit the land of Gilead

¹ Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, ² the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ³ "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, ⁴ the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." ⁵ Therefore 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 over the Jordan."

Concerns of Moses

⁶ And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? ⁷ Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? ⁸ Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ⁹ For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. ¹⁰ So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, ¹¹ 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, ¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' ¹³ "So the LORD's anger was aroused 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 gone. ¹⁴ And look! You have risen in your father's place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. ¹⁵ For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

Promise of the Children of Gad and Reuben

¹⁶ Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, ¹⁷ but we ourselves will be armed, ready to go before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸ We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. ¹⁹ For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

Agreement on terms of Inheritance of the Land of Gilead

²⁰ Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, ²¹ and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, ²² and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 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. ²⁴ Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth." ²⁵ And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. ²⁶ Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; ²⁷ but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

Official command concerning Inheritance of the Land of Gilead

²⁸ So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. ²⁹ And Moses said to them: "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. ³⁰ But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." ³¹ Then the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying: "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. ³² We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us on this side of the Jordan."

Inheritance given to the children of Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh

³³ So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to 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 its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country. ³⁴ And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, ³⁵ Atroth and Shopan and Jazer and Jogbehah, ³⁶ Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. ³⁷ And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, ³⁸ Nebo and Baal Meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah; and they gave other names to the cities which they built. ³⁹ And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. ⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. ⁴¹ Also Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair. ⁴² Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

- ✧ Gilead first appears as the region where Laban caught up with Jacob when Jacob was bringing his family and livestock from Syria to Canaan, and Laban made a covenant with Jacob at Mizpah in the mountains of Gilead, setting up a mound and a pillar saying I will not pass this point to you and you will not pass this point to me for harm, and God is witness between us. [\[Genesis 31:1-55\]](#)
- ✧ Yehowah defeated the inhabitants of the land when all the tribes of Israel together defeated Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan. [\[Numbers 21:21-35\]](#)
- ✧ The Children of Reuben and Gad had a very great multitude of livestock.
 - ◇ They saw that the land of Gilead was a place for Livestock, so they asked Moses and Eleazar the Priest and the leaders of the congregation for the territory Israel had conquered from Sihon and Og east of the Jordan River as their inheritance. [\[Numbers 32:1-5\]](#)
- ✧ Moses expressed his concern, that;
 - ◇ The rest of the Children of Israel would become discouraged with the decrease in the army strength by 84,230 men that were the number of soldiers from the tribes of Gad and Reuben. [\[Numbers 26:5-11, 15-18\]](#)
 - ◇ If the Children of Israel were thus discouraged, they might repeat the rebellion that had just cost them all 40 years in the Wilderness at Kadesh Barnea when they had been frightened by the report of the 12 spies who had spied out the land. [\[Numbers 10:12, 12:16, 13:3, 13:26, 32:6-15, Deuteronomy 1:1-8, 19-25, 9:23, Joshua 14:6-7\]](#)
 - ◇ Now it appears that with this request they again risk arousing Yehowah's anger against the Children of Israel that might cause another stay in the wilderness which would destroy another generation.

- ✧ All the tribes of the Children of Israel had been together when the land in question had been conquered. Now if each tribe were to fall away as the land they were to inherit was first conquered, who would help the remaining tribes conquer their land of inheritance?
- ✧ The Children of Reuben and Gad assured Moses and the leaders of Israel;
 - ✧ That they would not forsake the rest of the Children of Israel, but would go armed ahead of them until they all had received their inheritance in the Land of Canaan.
 - ✧ They would only build sheepfolds for their livestock and cities for their families to live in for their safety while the Land of Canaan was being conquered.
 - ✧ Then they will return to their homes and cities in the land of Gilead.
- ✧ Moses accepted their terms with the caution,
 - ✧ If you do not do as you have said, you have sinned against Yehowah, and be sure your sin will find you out.
- ✧ The agreement was reached and Moses made it official by issuing the command to Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the leaders of the tribes of Israel;
 - ✧ If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before Yehowah, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession.
 - ✧ But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.
- ✧ After the terms were accepted publicly, Moses gave to the Children of Gad, the Children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders.
- ✧ The children of Gad built:
 - ✧ Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, Atroth, Shopan, Jazer, Jogbehah, Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran, fortified cities and folds for sheep.
- ✧ The children of Reuben built:
 - ✧ Heshbon, Elealeh, Kirjathaim, Nebo, Baal Meon, Shibmah, and they gave other names to the cities they built.
- ✧ Of the children of Manasseh:
 - ✧ The children of Machir went to Gilead and took it and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it, so Moses gave Gilead to Machir, and he dwelt in it.
 - ✧ Jair went and took its small towns and called them Havoth Jair (towns of Jair).
 - ✧ Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.