

Instructions for Occupying Canaan (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 33:50–56

50 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, saying,
 51 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan,
 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured
 stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places;
 53 and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it.
 54 You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance,
 and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You
 shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.
 55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that
 those whom you let remain of them *will become* as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they
 will trouble you in the land in which you live.
 56 And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.’”

Boundaries of the Promised Land (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 34:1–15

Introduction

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
 2 “Command the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that
 shall fall to you as an inheritance, *even the* land of Canaan according to its borders.

Southern Border

3 Your southern sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern
 border shall extend from the end of the Salt Sea eastward.
 4 Then your border shall turn *direction* from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim and continue to Zin, and
 its termination shall be to the south of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall reach Hazaraddar and continue to
 Azmon.
 5 The border shall turn *direction* from Azmon to the brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea.

Western Border

6 ‘As for the western border, you shall have the Great Sea, that is, *its* coastline; this shall be your west
 border.

Northern Border

7 ‘And this shall be your north border: you shall draw your *border* line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor.
 8 You shall draw a line from Mount Hor to the Lebo-hamath, and the termination of the border shall be at
 Zedad;
 9 and the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and its termination shall be at Hazar-enan. This shall be your
 north border.

Eastern Border

10 ‘For your eastern border you shall also draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham,
 11 and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go
 down and reach to the slope on the east side of the Sea of Chinnereth.
 12 And the border shall go down to the Jordan and its termination shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your
 land according to its borders all around.’”

Land to be Divided Between the Nine Remaining Tribes (including the half-tribe of Manasseh)

13 So Moses commanded the sons of Israel, saying, “This is the land that you are to apportion by lot among you as a possession, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine and a half tribes.

14 For the tribe of the sons of Reuben have received *theirs* according to their fathers’ households, and the tribe of the sons of Gad according to their fathers’ households, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their possession.

15 The two and a half tribes have received their possession across the Jordan opposite Jericho, eastward toward the sunrising.”

Leaders Appointed to Distribute the Land (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 34:16–29

16 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

17 “These are the names of the men who shall apportion the land to you for inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun.

18 You shall take one leader of every tribe to apportion the land for inheritance.

19 These are the names of the men: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

20 Of the tribe of the sons of Simeon, Samuel the son of Ammihud.

21 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon.

22 Of the tribe of the sons of Dan a leader, Bukki the son of Jogli.

23 Of the sons of Joseph: of the tribe of the sons of Manasseh a leader, Hanniel the son of Ephod.

24 Of the tribe of the sons of Ephraim a leader, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan.

25 Of the tribe of the sons of Zebulun a leader, Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

26 Of the tribe of the sons of Issachar a leader, Paltiel the son of Azzan.

27 Of the tribe of the sons of Asher a leader, Ahihud the son of Shelomi.

28 Of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali a leader, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.”

29 These are those whom the LORD commanded to apportion the inheritance to the sons of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Cities for the Levites (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 35:1–8

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, saying,

2 “Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities.

3 The cities shall be theirs to live in; and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their beasts.

4 “The pasture lands of the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits around.

5 You shall also measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities.

6 The cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities.

7 All the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight cities, together with their pasture lands.

8 As for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall take more from the larger and you shall take less from the smaller; each shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his possession which he inherits.”

Cities of Refuge (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 35:9–34

Establishment of Six Cities of Refuge

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

10 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,
11 then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there.

12 The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial.

13 The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge.

14 You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are to be cities of refuge.

15 These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.

Laws Governing Murder Cases

16 ‘But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

17 If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

18 Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

19 The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him.

20 If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and *as a result* he died,

21 or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and *as a result* he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

Laws Governing Manslaughter Cases

22 ‘But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait,
23 or with any deadly object of stone, and without seeing it dropped on him so that he died, while he was not his enemy nor seeking his injury,

24 then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the blood avenger according to these ordinances.

25 The congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the blood avenger, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the manslayer at any time goes beyond the border of his city of refuge to which he may flee,
27 and the blood avenger finds him outside the border of his city of refuge, and the blood avenger kills the manslayer, he will not be guilty of blood

28 because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return to the land of his possession.

29 ‘These things shall be for a statutory ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Proper Legal Procedure (Witnesses) and Prohibition of Ransoming the Guilty

30 ‘If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

31 Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.

32 You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest.

Theological Rationale Behind the Laws

33 So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

34 You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.”

Epilogue—Daughters of Zelophehad (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 36

Historical Background (see Numbers 27:1–11)

1 And the heads of the fathers' *households* of the family of the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the heads of the fathers' *households* of the sons of Israel,

2 and they said, “The LORD commanded my lord to give the land by lot to the sons of Israel as an inheritance, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters.

The Case Presented by the Gileadite Clans

3 But if they marry one of the sons of the *other* tribes of the sons of Israel, their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; thus it will be withdrawn from our allotted inheritance.

4 When the jubilee of the sons of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.”

Moses Presents the Case Adjudication at Yahweh's Command

5 Then Moses commanded the sons of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, “The tribe of the sons of Joseph are right in *their* statements.

6 This is what the LORD has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, ‘Let them marry whom they wish; only they must marry within the family of the tribe of their father.’

7 Thus no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 Every daughter who comes into possession of an inheritance of any tribe of the sons of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Thus no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall each hold to his own inheritance.”

10 Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did:

11 Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad married their uncles' sons.

12 They married *those* from the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained with the tribe of the family of their father.

Conclusion of the Case and the Book of Numbers

13 These are the commandments and the ordinances which the LORD commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

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