

## Yahweh's War of Vengeance Against Midian is Carried Out (September–December 1407 BC)

### Numbers 31

#### The War of Vengeance Against Midian is Carried Out (initiated in Num 25:17)

- 1 Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,
- 2 “Seek vengeance for the Israelites on the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered to your people.”
- 3 Moses spoke to the people, saying, “Arm yourself from among your men for the battle, so that they will go against Midian to mete out the vengeance of Yahweh on Midian.
- 4 A thousand from each tribe of every tribe of Israel you will send to battle.”
- 5 So they were assigned from the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand equipped for battle.
- 6 Moses sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the battle, and Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest to the battle with them, and the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets of the blast *were* in his hand.
- 7 And they fought against Midian just as Yahweh commanded Moses, and they killed every male.
- 8 They killed the kings of Midian in addition to the ones they had slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam son of Beor by the sword.

#### The Spoils of War

- 9 The Israelites took captive the women of Midian and their children, and they plundered all their domestic animals and all their livestock and all their wealth.
- 10 They burned all their cities where they dwelled and all their camps with fire.
- 11 They took all the plunder and all the war-booty with the humans and domestic animals.
- 12 They brought the captives, the war-booty, and the plunder to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the community of the Israelites, to the camp to the desert-plateau of Moab, which *was* on *the* Jordan *across* Jericho.

#### Moses Orders All Male Children and Sexually Active Women to be Killed

- 13 And Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went out to meet them outside the camp.
- 14 But Moses was angry toward the leaders of the troops, the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds, who came from the battle of the war.
- 15 And Moses said to them, “You have kept alive every female?”
- 16 Behold, these women caused the Israelites, by the word of Balaam, to be in apostasy against Yahweh in the matter of Peor, so that the plague was among the community of Yahweh.
- 17 Now kill every male among the little children, and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse with a man.
- 18 But all the females who have not had sexual intercourse with a man, keep alive for yourselves.

#### Purification After War

- 19 And you, camp outside the camp seven days; all who killed a person and all who touched the slain purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, you and your captives.
- 20 You will purify yourselves and every garment and every object of hide and all the work of goats' hair, and every object of wood.”
- 21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of the battle who came from the war, “This *is* the decree of the law that Yahweh commanded Moses.
- 22 Only the gold and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead—
- 23 everything that will go through the fire—you will pass through the fire, and it will be clean, and only in waters of impurity will it be purified. Whatever does not go into the fire you will pass through the waters.
- 24 And you will wash your garments on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you will come into the camp.”

#### Plunder Divided Equally Between the Warriors and the Congregation

##### Priests Received 1/500<sup>th</sup> of Warrior's Share, Levites Received 1/50<sup>th</sup> of Congregation's Share

- 25 Yahweh said to Moses, saying,
- 26 “You and Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the families of the community, take count of the war-booty that was captured, both humans and the domestic animals;
- 27 divide the war-booty between those who engaged in the war, who went out to the battle, and all the community.
- 28 Exact a tribute for Yahweh from the men of the war, those who went out to the battle, one from five hundred persons, and from the cattle and from the male donkeys and from the flock;
- 29 take from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest *as* a contribution to Yahweh.
- 30 From half of the Israelites, take one *share* drawn by lot from the fifty from the humans, from the cattle, from the male donkeys, from the flock, from all the domestic animals, and give them to the Levities who keep the responsibilities of the tabernacle of Yahweh.”
- 31 Moses and Eleazar the priest did just as Yahweh commanded Moses.
- 32 Thus the war-booty that remained of the plunder that the people of the battle plundered was six hundred and seventy-five

thousand flocks of *sheep*,  
 33 seventy-two thousand cattle,  
 34 sixty-one thousand male donkeys,  
 35 and the life of humankind, from the women who did not have sexual intercourse with a man, all the persons were thirty-two thousand.  
 36 The half of the share that was going out to the battle: the number of the flock of *sheep* was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred;  
 37 the tribute to Yahweh from the flock was six hundred and seventy-five;  
 38 and the cattle were thirty-six thousand; and the tribute to Yahweh was seventy-two.  
 39 Of the male donkeys there were thirty thousand five hundred, and the tribute to Yahweh was sixty-one;  
 40 the humans were sixteen thousand, and the tribute to Yahweh was thirty-two persons.  
 41 And Moses gave away the tribute of the contribution of Yahweh to Eleazar the priest, just as Yahweh commanded Moses.  
 42 From the half of the Israelites, which Moses divided from the men who were fighting,  
 43 the half that belonged to the community was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred from the flock,  
 44 and thirty-six thousand cattle,  
 45 and thirty thousand five hundred male donkeys,  
 46 and sixteen thousand humans.  
 47 From the half that belonged to the Israelites, Moses took one share drawn by lot out of every fifty humans and domestic animals, and he gave them to the Levites, who keep the responsibility of the tabernacle of Yahweh, just as Yahweh commanded Moses.

#### **Army Commanders Bring a Special Offering of Gratitude for No Casualties**

48 Then the leaders of the thousands of the army, the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds, approached Moses,  
 49 and they said to Moses, “Your servants have taken count of the men of war who *were* in our charge, and no man is missing from us.  
 50 So we brought the offering of Yahweh, what each man found, objects of gold, bangles, bracelets, rings, earrings, and female ornaments, to make atonement for ourselves before Yahweh.”  
 51 Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all objects of work.  
 52 All the gold of the contribution that they raised up to Yahweh, from the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.  
 53 The men of battle plundered each for himself.  
 54 So Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the commanders of the thousands and hundreds, and they brought it to the tent of the assembly as a memorial for the Israelites before Yahweh.

## **Reuben and Gad Settle on the East Side of Jordan (September–December 1407 BC)**

### **Numbers 32**

#### **Reuben and Gad Ask to Stay on the East Side of Jordan**

1 The descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad had a very large number of livestock. And they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold it *was* a place for livestock.  
 2 The descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuben came, and they said to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, saying,  
 3 “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon,  
 4 the land that Yahweh struck before the community of Israel, *is* a land of livestock, and your servants have livestock.”  
 5 They said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as property; do not lead us *across* the Jordan.”

#### **Moses Misunderstands Their Intentions**

6 But Moses said to the descendants of Gad and to the descendants of Reuben, “Will your brothers go to war while you yourselves live here?  
 7 Why are you discouraging the hearts of the Israelites from crossing into the land that Yahweh gave to them?  
 8 This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land.  
 9 When they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the Israelites so that they did not come to the land that Yahweh gave to them.  
 10 So Yahweh’s anger burned on that day, and he swore an oath, saying,  
 11 ‘The men who went up from Egypt, from those twenty years old and above, will not see the land that I swore with an oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they have not wholly followed me,  
 12 except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, because they followed Yahweh wholly.’

13 And Yahweh became angry, and he made them wander in the desert forty years until the entire generation who did evil in the sight of Yahweh had died.

14 Behold, you stand in the place of your fathers, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more Yahweh's fierce anger against Israel.

15 If you turn from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness, and you would have destroyed all these people."

#### **The Two Tribes Explain**

16 They came near to him and said, "We will build sheep pens here for *the* flock of our livestock and cities for our little children; 17 but we ourselves will become armed *and* ready before the Israelites until we have brought them to their place, and our little children will live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

18 We will not return to our houses until the Israelites each obtain their inheritance for themselves.

19 For we will not take possession with them from across the Jordan and beyond because our inheritance has come to us from across the Jordan to the east."

#### **Moses Agrees to their Request**

20 So Moses said to them, "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before Yahweh for the war,

21 and everyone of you armed cross the Jordan before Yahweh until he has driven out his enemies from before him,

22 and the land is subdued before Yahweh, then afterward you will return and be free of obligation from Yahweh and from Israel, and this land will be your property before Yahweh.

23 But if you do not do so, behold, you have sinned against Yahweh, and know that your sin will find you.

24 Build for yourselves cities for your little children and sheep pens for your flocks; what has gone out from your mouth you will do."

25 So the descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuben said to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands.

26 Our little children, our wives, our livestock, and all of our animals will remain in the cities of Gilead,

27 but your servants, everyone who is armed for battle, will cross over before Yahweh to the war, just as my lord says."

#### **The Agreement is Witnessed Before the Leaders**

28 So Moses commanded them, Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the families of the tribes of the Israelites.

29 Moses said to them, "If the descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuben, everyone who is armed for the war, cross over the Jordan before Yahweh, and the land is subdued before you, you will give them the land of Gilead as property.

30 But if they will not cross over with you armed, they will acquire land in your midst in Canaan."

31 The descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuben answered and said, "What Yahweh has commanded your servants, we will do.

32 We ourselves will cross over armed before Yahweh to the land of Canaan, and the property of our inheritance *will remain* with us beyond the Jordan."

#### **Moses Divides the Land (Half-tribe of Manasseh Joins Reuben and Gad)**

33 So Moses gave to them, to the descendants of Gad and the descendants of Reuben, and to half of the tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon the king of Amorites and the kingdom of Og the king of the Bashan, the land with its cities *and their* territories, the cities of the surrounding land.

34 The descendants of Gad rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, and Aroer,

35 and Atroth Shophan, Jazer, and Jogbehah,

36 and Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, the cities of Mibzar, and the sheep pens for flocks.

37 The descendants of Reuben rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, and Kiriathaim,

38 and Nebo, Baal Meon (their names *were* changed), and Sibmah, and they renamed the cities that they rebuilt.

39 The descendants of Makir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and they captured it and drove out the Amorites who *were* in it.

40 So Moses gave Gilead to Makir son of Manasseh, and he lived in it.

41 And Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their unwallied villages, and he called them Havvoth Jair.

42 Nobah went and captured Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah after his *own* name.

## **The Inheritance of Reuben, Gad and East Manasseh (September–December 1407 BC)**

Joshua 13:8–12, 14–33

### **General Survey of the Inheritance—Levi Excluded**

8 With it the Reubenites, and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses Yahweh's servant gave to them:

9 from Aroer, which *is* on the edge of the wadi of Arnon, and the city which *is* in the middle of the wadi, and all the plateau *from* Medeba up to Dibon;

10 and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon up to the border of the Ammonites;

11 and Gilead, and the border of the Geshurite and the Maacathites, all of Mount Hermon, and Bashan up to Salecah;  
12 all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei--he was left over from the survivors of the Rephaim; these Moses had defeated and driven out.

14 Only the tribe of Levites Moses did not give an inheritance; the offerings made by fire to Yahweh the God of Israel *are* their inheritance, just as he promised to them.

#### **Reuben's Inheritance**

15 Moses gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of the descendants of Reuben according to their families.

16 Their territory was from Aroer, which *was* on the edge of the wadi of Arnon, and the city that *is* in the middle of the valley, and all the plateau by Medeba;

17 Heshbon and its cities that *are* on the plateau; Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,

18 Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,

19 Kiriathaim, Sibmah, and Zereth Shahaar on the hill of the valley;

20 Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth;

21 all of the cities of the plateau, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon and whom Moses defeated with the leaders of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the princes of Sihon who dwelled in the land.

22 *In addition* to their slain, the Israelites killed with the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination.

23 And the border of the descendants of Reuben *was* the Jordan and *its* banks. This *was* the inheritance of the descendants of Reuben according to their families, the cities, and their villages.

#### **Gad's Inheritance**

24 Moses gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the descendants of Gad, according to their families.

25 Their territory was Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites up to Aroer, which is east of Rabbah;

26 and from Heshbon up to Ramah-Mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim up to the territory to Debir;

27 in the valley of Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, Zaphon, and the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, the Jordan and *its* banks, up to the *lower* end of the Kinnereth Sea beyond the Jordan to the east.

28 This *is* the inheritance of the Gadites according to their families, the cities, and their villages.

#### **East Manasseh's Inheritance**

29 Moses gave *an inheritance* to the half-tribe of Manasseh; it was for the half-tribe of the descendants of Manasseh according to their families.

30 Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the settlements of Jair, which *are* in Bashan, sixty cities,

31 and half of Gilead, with Ashtaroth, Edrei, and the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; *these were allotted* to the children of Makir son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Makir according to their families.

#### **Summary**

32 These *are the territories* that Moses gave as an inheritance on the desert-plateau of Moab, beyond the Jordan, east of Jericho.

33 But to the tribe of Levi Moses did not give an inheritance; Yahweh the God of Israel, he *is* their inheritance, just as he promised them.

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