

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 The LORD spoke to Moses:

2 “Exact vengeance for the Israelites on the Midianites—after that you will be gathered to your people.”

3 So Moses spoke to the people: “Arm men from among you for the war, to attack the Midianites and to execute the LORD’s vengeance on Midian.

4 You must send to the battle a thousand men from every tribe throughout all the tribes of Israel.”

5 So a thousand from every tribe, twelve thousand armed for battle in all, were provided out of the thousands of Israel.

6 So Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from every tribe, with Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest, who was in charge of the holy articles and the signal trumpets.

7 They fought against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses, and they killed every male.

8 They killed the kings of Midian in addition to those slain—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—five Midianite kings. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.

The Spoils of War

9 The Israelites took the women of Midian captives along with their little ones, and took all their herds, all their flocks, and all their goods as plunder.

10 They burned all their towns where they lived and all their encampments.

11 They took all the plunder and all the spoils, both people and animals.

12 They brought the captives and the spoils and the plunder to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the Israelite community, to the camp on the plains of Moab, along the Jordan River across from Jericho.

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

13 Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went out to meet them outside the camp.

14 But Moses was furious with the officers of the army, the commanders over thousands and commanders over hundreds, who had come from service in the war.

15 Moses said to them, “Have you allowed all the women to live?

16 Look, these people through the counsel of Balaam caused the Israelites to act treacherously against the LORD in the matter of Peor—which resulted in the plague among the community of the LORD!

17 Now therefore kill every boy, and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse with a man.

18 But all the young women who have not had sexual intercourse with a man will be yours.

Purification After War

19 “Any of you who has killed anyone or touched any of the dead, remain outside the camp for seven days; purify yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

20 You must purify each garment and everything that is made of skin, everything made of goat’s hair, and everything made of wood.”

21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone into the battle, “This is the ordinance of the law that the LORD commanded Moses:

22 ‘Only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

23 everything that may stand the fire, you are to pass through the fire, and it will be ceremonially clean, but it must still be purified with the water of purification. Anything that cannot withstand the fire you must pass through the water.

24 You must wash your clothes on the seventh day, and you will be ceremonially clean, and afterward you may enter the camp.’”

Plunder Divided Equally Between the Warriors and the Congregation

Priests Received 1/500th of Warrior’s Share, Levites Received 1/50th of Congregation’s Share

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses:

26 “You and Eleazar the priest, and all the family leaders of the community, take the sum of the plunder that was captured, both people and animals.

27 Divide the plunder into two parts, one for those who took part in the war—who went out to battle—and the other for all the community.

28 “You must exact a tribute for the LORD from the fighting men who went out to battle: one life out of five hundred, from the people, the cattle, and from the donkeys and the sheep.

29 You are to take it from their half-share and give it to Eleazar the priest for a raised offering to the LORD.

30 From the Israelites’ half-share you are to take one portion out of fifty of the people, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep—from every kind of animal—and you are to give them to the Levites, who are responsible for the care of the LORD’s tabernacle.”

31 So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 The spoil that remained of the plunder which the fighting men had gathered was 675,000 sheep,
 33 72,000 cattle,
 34 61,000 donkeys,
 35 and 32,000 young women who had never had sexual intercourse with a man.
 36 The half-portion of those who went to war numbered 337,500 sheep;
 37 the LORD's tribute from the sheep was 675.
 38 The cattle numbered 36,000; the LORD's tribute was 72.
 39 The donkeys were 30,500, of which the LORD's tribute was 61.
 40 The people were 16,000, of which the LORD's tribute was 32 people.
 41 So Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD's raised offering, to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.
 42 From the Israelites' half-share that Moses had separated from the fighting men,
 43 there were 337,500 sheep from the portion belonging to the community,
 44 36,000 cattle,
 45 30,500 donkeys,
 46 and 16,000 people.
 47 From the Israelites' share Moses took one of every fifty people and animals and gave them to the Levites who were responsible for the care of the Lord's tabernacle, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Army Commanders Bring a Special Offering of Gratitude for No Casualties

48 Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the commanders over thousands and the commanders over hundreds, approached Moses
 49 and said to him, "Your servants have taken a count of the men who were in the battle, who were under our authority, and not one is missing.
 50 So we have brought as an offering for the LORD what each man found: gold ornaments, armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD."
 51 Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all of it in the form of ornaments.
 52 All the gold of the offering they offered up to the LORD from the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds weighed 16,750 shekels.
 53 Each soldier had taken plunder for himself.
 54 So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD.

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 Now the Reubenites and the Gadites possessed a very large number of cattle. When they saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were ideal for cattle,
 2 the Gadites and the Reubenites came and addressed Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the community. They said,
 3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon,
 4 the land that the LORD subdued before the community of Israel, is ideal for cattle, and your servants have cattle."
 5 So they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for our inheritance. Do not have us cross the Jordan River."

Moses Misunderstands Their Intentions

6 Moses said to the Gadites and the Reubenites, "Must your brothers go to war while you remain here?
 7 Why do you frustrate the intent of the Israelites to cross over into the land which the LORD has given them?
 8 Your fathers did the same thing when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land.
 9 When they went up to the Eshcol Valley and saw the land, they frustrated the intent of the Israelites so that they did not enter the land that the LORD had given them.
 10 So the anger of the LORD was kindled that day, and he swore,
 11 'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of the men twenty years old and upward who came from Egypt will see the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
 12 except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.'
 13 So the LORD's anger was kindled against the Israelites, and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all that generation that had done wickedly before the LORD was finished.
 14 Now look, you are standing in your fathers' place, a brood of sinners, to increase still further the fierce wrath of the LORD against the Israelites.

15 For if you turn away from following him, he will once again abandon them in the wilderness, and you will be the reason for their destruction.”

The Two Tribes Explain

16 Then they came very close to him and said, “We will build sheep folds here for our flocks and cities for our families,
17 but we will maintain ourselves in armed readiness and go before the Israelites until whenever we have brought them to their place. Our descendants will be living in fortified towns as a protection against the inhabitants of the land.
18 We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has his inheritance.
19 For we will not accept any inheritance on the other side of the Jordan River and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this eastern side of the Jordan.”

Moses Agrees to their Request

20 Then Moses replied, “If you will do this thing, and if you will arm yourselves for battle before the LORD,
21 and if all your armed men cross the Jordan before the LORD until he drives out his enemies from his presence
22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be free of your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. This land will then be your possession in the LORD’s sight.
23 “But if you do not do this, then look, you will have sinned against the LORD. And know that your sin will find you out.
24 So build cities for your descendants and pens for your sheep, but do what you have said you would do.”
25 So the Gadites and the Reubenites replied to Moses, “Your servants will do as my lord commands.
26 Our children, 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, to do battle in the LORD’s presence, just as my lord says.”

The Agreement is Witnessed Before the Leaders

28 So Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and to the heads of the families of the Israelite tribes.
29 Moses said to them: “If the Gadites and the Reubenites cross the Jordan with you, each one equipped for battle in the LORD’s presence, and you conquer the land, then you must allot them the territory of Gilead as their possession.
30 But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must receive possessions among you in Canaan.”
31 Then the Gadites and the Reubenites answered, “Your servants will do what the LORD has spoken.
32 We will cross armed in the LORD’s presence into the land of Canaan, and then the possession of our inheritance that we inherit will be ours on this side of the Jordan River.”

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

33 So Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the realm of King Sihon of the Amorites, and the realm of King Og of Bashan, the entire land with its cities and the territory surrounding them.
34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,
35 Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah,
36 Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran as fortified cities, and constructed pens for their flocks.
37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim,
38 Nebo, Baal Meon (with a change of name), and Sibmah. They renamed the cities they built.
39 The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it.
40 So Moses gave Gilead to Machir, son of Manasseh, and he lived there.
41 Now Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their small towns and named them Havvoth Jair.
42 Then Nobah went and captured Kenath and its villages and 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 The other half of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad received their allotted tribal lands beyond the Jordan, just as Moses, the LORD’s servant, had assigned them.
9 Their territory started from Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley), included the city in the middle of the valley, the whole plain of Medeba as far as Dibon,
10 and all the cities of King Sihon of the Amorites who ruled in Heshbon, and ended at the Ammonite border.
11 Their territory also included Gilead, Geshurite and Maacathite territory, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah—
12 the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. (He was one of the few remaining Rephaites.) Moses defeated them and took their lands.
14 However, Moses did not assign land as an inheritance to the Levites; their inheritance is the sacrificial offerings made to the LORD

God of Israel, as he instructed them.

Reuben's Inheritance

15 Moses assigned land to the tribe of Reuben by its clans.

16 Their territory started at Aroer (on the edge of the Arnon Valley) and included the city in the middle of the valley, the whole plain of Medeba,

17 Heshbon and all its surrounding cities on the plain, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,

18 Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,

19 Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley,

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

21 It encompassed all the cities of the plain and the whole realm of King Sihon of the Amorites who ruled in Heshbon. Moses defeated him and the Midianite leaders Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba (they were subjects of Sihon and lived in his territory).

22 The Israelites killed Balaam son of Beor, the omen reader, along with the others.

23 The border of the tribe of Reuben was the Jordan. The land allotted to the tribe of Reuben by its clans included these cities and their towns.

Gad's Inheritance

24 Moses assigned land to the tribe of Gad by its clans.

25 Their territory included Jazer, all the cities of Gilead, and half of Ammonite territory as far as Aroer near Rabbah.

26 Their territory ran from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir.

27 It included the valley of Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, and the rest of the realm of King Sihon of Heshbon, the area east of the Jordan to the end of the Sea of Kinnereth.

28 The land allotted to the tribe of Gad by its clans included these cities and their towns.

East Manasseh's Inheritance

29 Moses assigned land to the half-tribe of Manasseh by its clans.

30 Their territory started at Mahanaim and encompassed all Bashan, the whole realm of King Og of Bashan, including all sixty cities in Havvoth Jair in Bashan.

31 Half of Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities in the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were assigned to the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh, to half the descendants of Makir by their clans.

Summary

32 These are the land assignments made by Moses on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho.

33 However, Moses did not assign land as an inheritance to the Levites; their inheritance is the LORD God of Israel, as he instructed them.

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