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Moshe Remembered the Distribution of the Conquered Land

3: 12-22

Moshe remembered the distribution of the conquered land DIG: Why did the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manassah want to live apart from the other tribes? What would allow them to settle east of the Jordan (see Numbers 32:1-5)? Why? How would all parties involved benefit from these instructions? The Jordan Valley was a natural geographical barrier to their communication. What problems between the tribes might this create? Why do you think ADONAI allowed them to remain in separate camps? What was Joshua told and why?

REFLECT: How are you and your relatives interwoven and interdependent? What communication problems have you had to overcome? When has someone shared the battles of life with you? In what ways? How did their presence make a difference in the outcome?

Moses once again recalls the allotment of the newly conquered land in the Transjordan to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, as well as his challenge to those specific tribes to participate in the conquest of the land of Canaan, their responsibilities were not finished until the Holy War was complete.

The sons of Reuben and Gad had very large herds and flocks, and they especially wanted this land because they saw that the territory of Jazer and Gilead were ideal for livestock. So, the sons of Reuben and Gad came and said to Moses, Eleazar the cohen, and the princes of the community saying: Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon - the territory ADONAI conquered before the community of Isra'el - are suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock. Then they said: If we have found favor in your eyes, let this territory be given to your servants as a possession. Don't make us cross the Jordan (Numbers 32:1-5).

This land we took in possession at that time - from Aroer by the Wadi Arnon and half the hill country of the Gilead and its cities - I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh (3:12). In general, the tribes of **Reuben** and **Gad** shared the southern half, while the **half-tribe of Manassah** received the northern part of **Gilead** and **Bashan**.

Another parenthetical note: Though it is impossible to determine precisely when **verses 13-22** were inserted, **2:12b** indicates that it was after the initial conquest of **the Land**. Editorial notes in the Pentateuch do no harm to the doctrine of biblical inspiration. Inspiration refers to the final product rather to the manner of writings. The original texts of Scripture are **God-breathed (Second Timothy 3:16)**, and therefore contain no errors, for **God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)**. **The Ruach Ha-Kodesh** superintended the work of editors just as **He** did the historical research of **Luke (Luke 1:1-4)** so that the final words of the text, though obtained by different methods, are the words intended by **ADONAI**. It was this final text (including editorial insertions) that **Yeshua Messiah** pronounced to be perfect (**Matthew 5:18; John 10:35**).⁹¹

The rest of northern Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, which is otherwise called the region of the Argob, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. All the Bashan is called the land of Rephaim. Jair son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites. He called them - the Bashan - after his own name, Havvoth-jair's Villages, as it is the case to this day. To Machir, another sub-tribe of Manassah, I gave the Gilead (3:13-15).

The Reubenites' and Gadites' territory is now described in more detail. To the Reubenites and Gadites I gave from the Gilead as far as the Wadi Arnon in the south - the middle of the wadi as the border - and as far as Jabbok River (where it makes a sharp turn to the north), the wadi that is the border of the sons of Ammon, and the Arabah, with the Jordan River as the border from Kinneret (or the Sea of Galilee) as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea (which is now called the Dead Sea), under the slopes of Pisgah eastward (3:16-17). The Dead Sea and **the Jordan River** formed **the tribes' western border**.

These next verses emphasize the unity of **God's people**. It would have been easy for **the Transjordan tribes** to settle down in **their land** and let the other **tribes** get on with **their** conquests. So, **Moshe** reminded **them** that **ADONAI your God has**

given you this land to possess it, but there was to be no selfish enjoyment of it until the whole **nation** had rest. In all respects, **the nation** had to act as one army, under the leadership of **YHVH**. They were to get **ready for battle**, because they were to **cross over ahead of your brothers Bnei-Yisrael - all the men of valor. Only your wives and your little ones and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) may stay in your cities (to see link click [At](#) - Isra'el's Conquest of the Transjordan) that I have given you, until ADONAI gives rest to your brothers as He has for you, and they also possess the land that ADONAI your God is giving them across the Jordan. Then they could return to their families, each man to his possession that I have given you (3:18-20)**. The now deceased rebellious **generation of the Exodus** had used **their children** as an excuse for **their** disobedience (**1:39**); however, **the new generation** had obeyed **God** and **their** obedience meant that now **they** could leave **their** families in the security of **their** newly acquired towns.⁹²

Israelites had been encamped on the edge of the Promised Land for about three months. It had probably been over seven months since they began their final approach to the Land. The events that occurred during that seven month time may have proceeded as follows: the peaceful passing through Edom, Mo'ab, and Ammon; the conquest of Sihon and Og; the beginning of settling into the inheritance by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manassah, while the rest of the tribes set up camp across the Jordan River from Jericho; Moses' completion of the book of Deuteronomy and presentation of it to the people; Moshe's death; the mourning of God's people for him; and the preparation of God's people for entrance into Canaan.⁹³

In a Holy War, **ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot: the LORD God of heaven's angelic armies**, leads and fights for **His people**. He is a tender-Warrior (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click [Ec](#) - When Abram Heard Lot Had Been Taken Captive, He Went in Pursuit as far as Dan**). No one should doubt **His** help at this time after witnessing the total destruction of **Sihon** (see **[Au](#) - The Defeat of Sihon**), and **Og** (see **[Av](#) - The Defeat of Og**).



Moses then looked to the future as entrusted into the hands of **his** successor, **Joshua**. He commanded **Joshua** at that time saying: **Your eyes have seen all that ADONAI your God has done to these two kings. ADONAI will do the same to all the kingdoms you are about to cross into. You must not fear them, for it is ADONAI your God who fights for you (3:22-22)**. Without the **LORD's** help, **Isra'el's** victory would be impossible. **God's** power, not **Isra'el's** unaided strength, would achieve the victory. **Moshe** bolstered **Isra'el's** resolve and faith by giving this assurance (see **1:20**, **2:31**, and **20:4**).⁹⁴ These words, placed here, are picked up again later (see **Fs - Moses Went**), when **Moses** actually commissions **Joshua**. They therefore reinforce the nature of **Deuteronomy** as the "last testament" of **Moshe**, and give the book a forward look toward life in **the Land** of Promise. This is confirmed again when the book of **Joshua** opens with a repetition of **Moses'** encouragement to **his successor**, but this time placed in the mouth of **the LORD**.⁹⁵

Moses found great encouragement in **YHVH's** call to action. **God** allowed **him** to conquer and distribute **the lands** east of **the Jordan** River. As a result, **Moshe** began to hope that **Ha'Shem** would show grace and allow **him** to enter **the Land** of Promise. But even **his** repentance with tears will not change the mind of **ADONAI**, as we shall see next.⁹⁶

Therefore, just as the Ruach Ha'Kodesh says: **Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness. There your fathers put Me to the test, though they saw My works for forty years. Therefore, I was provoked by this generation, and I said, "They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways." As I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter My rest" . . . saying through David after so long a time, just as it has been said before, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."** For if **Joshua**

had given them rest, **God would not have spoken of another day later on. So, there remains a *Shabbat* rest for the people of God. (Hebrews 3:7-11; 4:7b-9).**

Haftarah D'varim: Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 1:1-27 (to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

A brood of evildoers with deprived children hardened by **sin (Isaiah 1:4)**, **Isra'el** in **Isaiah's** day became like **Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:10; Deuteronomy 32:32)**. **Judges** took **bribes**, and justice could not be found for **the orphan** or **the widow (Isaiah 1:23)**. **Ha'Shem** needed to purify that sinful nation and restore just **judges**. Wicked **judges** who defer to the rich must be **purged**, even if chaos and destruction would shake their society. **God** vowed to cleanse **Isra'el's** impurities as one uses lye to **purify** metals (**Isaiah 1:25**). This Haftarah, third on the theme of affliction, culminates in judgment on **Isra'el**. This portion is always read on the Sabbath that precedes Tisha B'Av (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD**), since the **the vision of Isaiah** concerns the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. It is a fast day examining the destruction of both Temples and the suffering that follows from national exile. The **sins** of idolatry and baseless hatred must be uprooted to reverse the causes of exile and loss of nationhood.

B'rit Chadashah suggested readings for Parashah D'varim: Yochanan (John) 15:1-11; Messianic Jews (Hebrews) 3:7-19

Hardening from the effects of sin across generations led to **Stephen's** charge: **Stiffnecked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You continually oppose the Ruach Ha'Kodesh! You do the same things your fathers did (Acts 7:52)! Rabbi Sha'ul** witnessed **Stephen's** martyrdom and looked on **approvingly (Acts 8:1)**. Even **Stephen's** last words: **Lord! Don't hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60)**, fail to change **Sha'ul's** mind. In fact, **Sha'ul** began persecuting **the** entire **Messianic Community** after that, imprisoning **men** and **women** alike (**Acts 8:3**). The scattering of Hellenistic **Jews**, however, led to the most significant step forward in spreading the Good News, much to the dismay and rage of those who saw **Messianic Judaism** as an idolatry that had to be destroyed.