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The Promise of Reuben and Gad

32: 16-24

The promise of Reuben and Gad DIG: What effect do you think the compromise offer made by the tribes of Reuben and Gad had on their relationship with the other tribes? Did this appease Moshe? Why or why not? When it was not their land, cities, wives, children or herds they were fighting for, how will Moses know whether the tribes east of the Jordan will be effective fighting for their fellow tribes?

REFLECT: How is the enemy defeated in your life? Are you trying to do it all by yourself? How aware are you of spiritual warfare? Do you have people praying for you? Do you pray for others? Are you attracting enemy fire from the enemy or is he leaving you alone? What does that say about you and your walk with Him? Can you fight as long as it takes to defeat the enemy? Do you feel like giving up? Who is your help?

They promised to fight as long as it took to defeat the Canaanites.

No doubt **the tribes of Reuben and Gad** probably weren't too happy about being called a **brood of sinners (32:14)**, but it was **their** own fault for presenting **their** appeal in such a careless manner. Now **they** carefully explained to **Moses** that **they** were willing and prepared to enter **the Land** and fight alongside **their** brothers until **Canaan** had been conquered. Only after **the tribe** had received **their** inheritance would the two **tribes** (and later **half of the clans of Manasseh**) return to **the Transjordan** territory to settle down. However, first **they** would like to **build fortified cities**, to protect **their wives and children**, and **pens** for **their cattle**. Then **they** would join the other **tribes** in crossing the Jordan River and confronting **Isra'el's enemies (to see link click Gh - Isra'el's Enemies)**.⁷³⁶

The promise of Reuben and Gad (32:16-19): The response from **the men** addressed so angrily seems to be like, "You have **us** all wrong. **We** are sincere in **our** desire to find the pleasure of **the Lord**. **We** will gladly go with **the people** into **Canaan**; only let **us** prepare **pens** for **our sheep** and places to live for our **children** and our **wives**. Then **we** will come; and to **them** we will return." **Then they came up to Moses and said: We would like to**

build pens here for our livestock and fortified cities for our women and children. But we ourselves will be armed and ready for action to march at the head of the people of Isra'el and lead the attack, until we have defeated the Canaanites. Our little ones will stay in the fortified cities here in the Transjordan for their protection (see [Fz - Reuben and Gad Request Land](#)), because of the Canaanites now living in the land. However, we will not return to our own homes until every man in Isra'el has taken possession of his land for inheritance. We will not have an inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, westward; because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan, eastward. Their promises were sound; they had met the demands of Moses.



The positive response of Moses (32:20-24): Moshe was not easily calmed. **He** spoke to **the people** as, in a sense, a father to an errant but repentant child. **He** set up a balance between blessing and a curse, **saying to them, "If you will do this - if you will arm yourselves to go before ADONAI to the war, and if every one of your soldiers will cross the Jordan before ADONAI, until He has driven out His enemies ahead of Him, and if the land has been conquered before ADONAI, and only after that do you return - then you will be clear before ADONAI and before Isra'el, and this land here will be yours to possess before ADONAI."** The phrase **before ADONAI** is used for different times here, and repeated in **32:27, 29, and 32**. Therefore, **ADONAI** is the witness to what **they** have promised. **They** had made an oath, and they needed to keep the oath. This was to be **God's** war; therefore, it was a holy war (see [Deuteronomy Ag - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh](#)).

But, if you will not do this, then you have sinned against ADONAI, and you must understand that your sin will find you out. The language is striking: it is not just that their sin would be discovered but that **their sin** would be an active agent in discovering

them. This is not unlike the picture of **sin** as lying at the door of Cain's life (**Genesis 4:7**). But go ahead, **build cities for your children and pens for you sheep; then do what you said you would do.**⁷³⁷ The book of **Joshua** records how **the tribes of Reuben and Gad** kept **their** word, spear-heading the campaign in **Canaan** until the main opposition was subdued and the land distributed among the other tribes. **Then Joshua summoned the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now - to this very day - you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission ADONAI your God gave you. Now that YHVH has given them rest as He promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of God gave you on the other side of the Jordan"** (**Joshua 22:1-4**).⁷³⁸

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** do not compromise. **You** are always **Holy, Holy, Holy (Isaiah 6:3)**. **You** conquered **sin** at the cross, by **Your** glorious victory over death when **You** rose! **You** will defeat Satan again big time at the end of the Tribulation. Satan will bring **the beast** and all the kings of the earth with their armies against **You**, but it won't be a battle, it will be a slaughter. It is with **the sword of Your mouth** that **You** wield and are victorious! **From His mouth comes a sharp sword - so that with it He may strike down the nations - and He shall rule them with an iron rod, and He treads the winepress of the furious wrath of Elohei-Tzva'ot . . . Then the beast was captured, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs before him by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, as well as those who had worshiped his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the One riding on the horse. And all the birds gorged themselves with their flesh (Revelation 19:15, 20-21)**. Life is so busy on this earth, but soon there will be **a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1)**. May I live focused on the eternal new heaven and earth, never compromising with anything that might bring me away from **You**. **You** are worthy of all my love and worship! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*