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Raiders Shall Raid Gad, But He Shall Raid at Their Heels 49: 19

Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels DIG: What characterized this tribe of Gad? What were they known for? Why were they given the best land by Joshua? Why was the tribe of Gad constantly under attack? Why did they build an altar on the Jordan River? What did the name of that altar convey about their unity with the other tribes of Isra'el?

REFLECT: What can we learn from this tribe as far as being rewarded when we obey and honor ADONAI? How can honoring God present difficulties with other believers? In what ways are you like the tribe of Gad? How are you different? Do you want to change that? How does the knowledge that you are an overcomer change the way you look at the world? What is it exactly that you will inherit?



Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels (49:19).

Gad is the second of the four sons by the maidservants. They are arranged, not according to their mothers or their ages, but according to the blessing pronounced upon them. Thus, the two warlike tribes came first, first Dan, and now Gad. Because

there is no short *a* sound in Hebrew, his name is actually pronounced *God*, not *Gad*. This was a tribe of **brave warriors**, an elite army unit, the mossad of the tribes of **Isra'el** if you will.

In the **near historical future**, **Gad** will be attacked by a band of **raiders**, **but he** will attack them **at their heels**. **His** name comes from the root word for warrior. There is a play on words in this single verse because **four** of the six Hebrew words have the root word for **Gad** in them. **Gad** in Hebrew sounds like the noun, a band of **raiders** and the verb **raid** is used twice. **His** original given name meant *good fortune or lucky*, yet **he** was constantly under attack.⁷⁸⁶

When the nation of **Isra'el** came out of its forty years of wilderness wanderings, the **Gadites** did not settle west of the Jordan River with most of the other tribes. **Joshua** gave **Gad the best** of the new **land** east of the Jordan (**Numbers 32**) because they obeyed **the LORD** and punished **Israel's** wicked enemies (**Deuteronomy 32:20-21**). **Gad** was one of the tribes especially dedicated in the fight to conquer **the Land** as **God** commanded (don't tell the United Nations, but this **land** would encompass the country of Jordan today). **Jacob** prophesied that **raiders shall raid Gad**. **Their** territory was large and **they** were constantly under **attack** by the enemies of the Jewish people - **the Ammonites** and the **Moabites** who were the terrorist's of their day (**Judges 11:1 to 12:7; First Samuel 11**). **The Gadites** had to be strong because of where **they** lived.

After the tribes had settled into **the Land**, however, they were shocked to hear that **Gad** had built an **altar** in its territory across the Jordan. The other tribes took **the altar** to be a sign that **the Gadites** were falling away from the true worship of **God** in Shiloh, and plans were made to attack **Gad** for their perceived disobedience. Prior to battle, however, a delegation traveled to **Gad** to learn more about its action and rebuke **them** for **their** perceived sin. When they got there, however, they discovered that **Gad** had actually constructed **the altar** to *honor the LORD* and to prevent the Jordan River, a significant geographical divide between **Gad** and the majority of the other tribes, from spiritually dividing **the people** of **ADONAI**. **What they said satisfied the people of Isra'el**. **The people of Isra'el blessed God and said no more about going to war against the descendants of Reuben and Gad and destroying the land where they lived**. **The descendants of Reuben and Gad called the altar: A Witness Between Us That ADONAI is God (Joshua 22:33-34)**. Therefore, **war** was averted, but we are reminded that differences in how we choose to honor **the LORD** may result in misunderstanding, discord and strife, even among believers.

So when **Ya'akov** prophesied: **but he shall raid at their heels, they** knew that **they** already had the victory. It is as if **Jacob** was saying, "They think they are attacking *you*, but you will attack *them*! This is very interesting and we continue to see this being played out in our own day. We can rely on **God's** Word that **Isra'el** will be victorious. Moses had also prophesied **about Gad** when he said: **Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain! Gad lives there like a lion, tearing at the arm or head of his enemies (Deuteronomy 33:20).**

Why did **ADONAI** designate **them** as tribe of **warriors**? We can read about some of the qualities of this elite military unit in **First Chronicles**. In describing **Gad** much later during the times of King David, we read: **Some Gadites defected to David** (as opposed to continuing to support King Saul who had disobeyed **the LORD**) **at his stronghold in the wilderness, or masada. They were brave warriors, [trained] for battle and [skillful] in handling the shield and spear. Their faces were the faces of lions, and they were as swift gazelles in the mountains (First Chronicles 12:8).** What an amazing description.

They were brave warriors. What does this mean for us today? Well . . . it's both good news and bad news. The good news is that **God** is in control. But the bad news is that we are in the midst of a tremendous battle called life. We know that we already have the victory and that **we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37)**, but it is still a battle nonetheless. The spiritual walk on planet earth is not going to be easy. In fact, if it were easy to follow **God** everyone would be doing it. But **Yeshua** says, "If you make a decision to come to **Me**, you had better count the costs. If you come to **Me**, you have to die to yourself. If you come to **Me**, you need to pick up your cross and follow **Me**." The question is this. Can we, like the tribe of **Gad**, stand strong in the face of the enemy?

The Gadites were trained for battle. They were Israeli army strong and committed, but if you are strong and committed without any training you are still in trouble. The tribe of **Gad** was tenacious, but they were also teachable. These were not loose cannons. And like the **Gadites**, we need to be teachable. In one sense, being a believer happens at the moment of faith (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith](#)**). This is called justification. At that moment we are justified in the eyes of **God (Romans 3:21-16; Titus 3:7)**. But there is a second aspect of our faith called sanctification, or to be set apart, specifically, to the holy use and purposes of **God (Romans 7:14-25; First Thessalonians 5:23-24)**. This is a life-long process of being **conformed to the image of Christ**. In other words, being teachable.

They were also **skillful**, this word coming from the Hebrew meaning *to arrange*, or *to put*

things in order. So the tribe of **Gad** had **their** priorities straight and as believers, we also need to put our priorities in order because we have **the world**, our flesh and the devil against us. Sometimes it seems like a tsunami of opposition. **John** writes to us and says: **Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever (First John 2:15-17).** So how do we *keep our priorities in order*? **King Solomon** said it like this: **Trust in ADONAI with all your heart; do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him; then He will level your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).**

In the **far eschatological future**, **Gad** will overcome **the Ammonites** and Moabites in the Millennial Kingdom. **Jeremiah** prophesied that in the end times **the Ammonites will become a mound or ruins, and its surrounding villages will be set on fire. Then Isra'el will drive out those who drove her out (Jeremiah 49:1-2).** In the end, just as **the Ammonites** and the Moabites possessed **their** territory, the Jews will end up possessing theirs. However, **ADONAI** will be gracious to them. Just as **He** promised the restoration of **Ammon (Jeremiah 49:2 and 6)**, **He** also promises the restoration of Mo'ab (**Isaiah 16:1-5; Jeremiah 48:12-17 and 47**). Both will serve **Isra'el** in the Messianic Kingdom.

Life is often associated with sorrow and hardship, but victory is promised to the faithful soldier, and **to those who overcome**, there are eternal spiritual blessings.⁷⁸⁷ **Jesus** made *seven specific promises* to **the overcomer**. **For everyone born of God overcomes the world. Our faith** is the means by which we **overcome the world**. Therefore, **who is it that overcomes the world? Only he or she who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God (First John 5:4-5).** What will **overcomers** inherit?

Yeshua said that **the overcomer will be given the right to eat from the tree of life (Revelation 2:7), the overcomer will not be hurt at all by the second death (Revelation 2:11), will be given some of the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17), will be given authority over the nations (Revelation 2:26-28), will be dressed in white and never be blotted out from the book of life (Revelation 3:5), will be made a pillar in the temple of God and Christ will also write on them a new name (Revelation 3:12) and will be given the right to sit with Christ on His throne, just as He overcame and sat down with His Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21).** Are you, like **the tribe of Gad**, constantly under attack today? If you are living for **Christ**,



you are in a spiritual battle whether you like it or not. Thus, we need to be teachable, **brave** spiritual **warriors**, having our priorities in order so that we can **overcome the world** and live with our **Savior** forever.

Continuing to prophecy to **the** twelve **sons** circled around **his** bed, **Jacob** next directed **his** attention to **Asher**, whose mother was **Zilpah**, **Rachel's** maidservant.