

Deuteronomy 33:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.

Analysis

Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad—Moses blesses Gad with territorial expansion and military might. Marchiv (enlargeth) comes from the root rachav (to make wide/spacious), indicating God's provision of lebensraum (living space). Gad's Trans-Jordan inheritance was already secured (Numbers 32), but this blessing promises continued expansion.

He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head—Gad is compared to lavi (a mature lion), not merely fierce but dominant and territorial. The vivid imagery of tearing 'arm with crown of head' (Hebrew: zeroa aph qadhqod) describes a lion's lethal attack, seizing both limb and skull. Gad's military prowess would protect Israel's eastern flank against Ammonite and Moabite aggression, fulfilling their covenant obligation despite settling outside Canaan proper (Numbers 32:20-22).

Historical Context

Gad's territory in Gilead (east of Jordan) was prime grazing land but also exposed to constant raids from Ammon, Moab, and desert tribes. Moses's blessing acknowledges both the danger and the courage required to hold this frontier. Gad did indeed produce mighty warriors (1 Chronicles 5:18-22, 12:8-15) who defended Israel's borders. Their eastward position made them perpetual guardians, fulfilling the 'enlargement' through military strength rather than agricultural plenty.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'frontier' positions in your life or community require the courage and tenacity of a lion to defend biblical truth?
2. How does Gad's faithfulness to fight for his brothers, despite having his own inheritance secured, model Christian solidarity?

Interlinear Text

כָּלֹב יָא	מְרַחֵב	בָּרְכֵה	אֶתְּמָרֵךְ	רְאֵמָרְךָ	כָּלֹב יָא
And of Gad	he said	Blessed	be he that enlargeth	And of Gad	as a lion
H1410	H559	H1288	H7337	H1410	H3833
שָׁכֵן	עַל	אֶת	בְּרֵאשִׁית		
he dwelleth	and teareth	the arm	with	the crown of the head	
H7931	H2963	H2220	H637	H6936	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 49:19 (Parallel theme): Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.