

Numbers 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Analysis

Over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel. Gad completed Reuben's southern division under commander Eliasaph (גָּדַע, "God has added"). Born to Jacob through Leah's maidservant Zilpah, Gad received the blessing "a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last" (Genesis 49:19)—a prophecy of resilience and ultimate victory despite temporary setbacks. The name Gad itself means "fortune" or "troops," fitting for a militarily significant tribe.

Eliasaph's father Deuel (דְּעוֹלֵל, "knowledge of God") is sometimes spelled Reuel (רְעוֹלֵל, "friend of God") in Numbers 2:14, likely representing dialectical variation or scribal tradition. The dual naming reminds us that knowing God and being God's friend are inseparable—true knowledge of God produces intimate relationship, not mere information.

Historical Context

Gad numbered 45,650 warriors (Numbers 1:25), a substantial force. Eliasaph served as Gad's representative for the census (Numbers 1:14) and brought offerings at the dedication (Numbers 7:42-47). Gad later chose to settle east of the Jordan in Gilead's pasturelands (Numbers 32), joining Reuben and half-Manasseh in Transjordan. Despite settling outside Canaan proper, Gad's warriors faithfully crossed Jordan to fight alongside their brethren until the conquest concluded (Joshua 22:1-6). Gad's territory faced constant pressure from Moab and Ammon,

fulfilling the prophecy of being overcome yet overcoming. The Mesha Stele (9th century BC) records Moabite King Mesha's conflicts with "the men of Gad" who had "dwelt in the land of Ataroth from ancient times."

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does Gad's march position (completing the southern division) teach about how God uses those with humble origins for significant kingdom purposes?
2. How does the dual spelling Deuel/Reuel (knowledge/friend of God) challenge you to pursue not just information about God but intimate friendship with Him?
3. In what ways might you, like Gad, be called to "overcome at the last" despite facing overwhelming opposition in your current circumstances?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל־
H5921 And over the host H6635

אֶבֶן־
H4294 of the tribe H1121

מִתְנָדֶר־
H1121 of the children H1121

תְּגִיד־
H1410 of Gad H1410

אֶלְיָסָף
H460 was Eliasaph

וְעַל־
H1121 of the children H1121

אֶבֶן־
H1845 of Deuel

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 1:14 (Parallel theme): Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Numbers 2:14 (Parallel theme): Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

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