

Numbers 32:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

Analysis

Reuben and Gad, possessing large cattle herds, saw that Transjordan land was 'a place for cattle.' Their focus on economic opportunity at the threshold of Canaan would lead to requesting settlement east of Jordan (verse 5)—a choice with troubling implications about priorities and commitment to the whole community's mission.

Historical Context

Jazer and Gilead were conquered from Sihon and Og (21:21-35). The land was indeed suitable for grazing, as Reuben and Gad accurately observed. Yet their observation of material advantage tempted them to settle short of the full promise. Recognizing opportunity isn't wrong, but prioritizing it above God's purposes is.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do material opportunities tempt you to settle for less than God's best?
 2. When is pragmatic thinking about resources actually lack of faith in God's provision?

Interlinear Text

מִקְנָה	בְּ בִּ הִ פִּי	וְלִבְנֵי	רְאֹבֵן	וְלִבְנֵי
for cattle	multitude	H1961	Now the children	of Reuben
H4735	H7227		H1121	H7205
				H1121
גָּד	עַמְּךָ	מְאֹד	יִרְאָה	עַזְרָה
of Gad	great	had a very	and when they saw	and the land
H1410	H6099	H3966	H7200	H776
				H3270
וְאֶת	גָּלְעָד	וְהַבָּה	מִקְרָם	מִקְרָם
H853	and the land	of Gilead	H2009	that behold the place
	H776	H1568		H4725
				H4725

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 21:32 (Parallel theme): And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

Numbers 32:3 (Parallel theme): Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

Numbers 32:35 (Parallel theme): And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Joggbehah,