

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

מִקְנֶה:	כַּב	הָהָה	וְלִבְנֵי	רְאוּבֵן	וְלִבְנֵי	
for cattle	multitude	H1961	Now the children	of Reuben	Now the children	
H4735	H7227		H1121	H7205	H1121	
גֹּד	עַצּוֹם	מָאֵד	וַיֵּרְאוּ	אֶת	אֶרֶץ	יַעֲזָר
of Gad	great	had a very	and when they saw	H853	and the land	of Jazer
H1410	H6099	H3966	H7200		H776	H3270
וְאֶת	אֶרֶץ	גִּלְעָד	וְהִנֵּה	מָקוֹם	מָקוֹם	
H853	and the land	of Gilead	H2009	that behold the place	that behold the place	
	H776	H1568		H4725	H4725	
מִקְנֶה:						
for cattle						
H4735						

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 Jogbehah,