

Numbers 32:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

Analysis

And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel—Moses accuses Reuben and Gad of being a "brood of sinners" (literal Hebrew: tarbut anashim chattaim, תַּרְבוּת אֲנָשִׁים חַטָּאִים). "Increase" suggests they multiplied or bred sinfulness, becoming worse than their fathers. "Augment" (saphah, טָפַח) means to add to or heap up—their request would pile more fuel on God's already fierce anger.

This verse powerfully depicts generational sin patterns—children inheriting and often intensifying parental rebellion. Moses fears they would discourage the nation from crossing Jordan just as the spies discouraged their fathers from entering from the south. The phrase "fierce anger" (charon aph, חָרוֹן אַף) depicts God's burning wrath. Moses warns that covenant communities face corporate judgment when individual tribes prioritize selfish interests over collective obedience.

Historical Context

The tribes of Reuben and Gad had "very great multitudes of cattle" (Numbers 32:1) and saw the lush grazing land east of Jordan as ideal. Their request seemed practical but threatened national unity and trust in God's promised land west of Jordan. Moses's sharp rebuke shows he initially viewed this as treasonous self-

interest that could demoralize Israel and repeat the Kadesh disaster. Only when they pledged to fight alongside their brothers (vv. 16-19) did Moses relent.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do generational sin patterns intensify when successive generations fail to learn from ancestors' failures?
2. In what ways might pragmatic self-interest disguise spiritual compromise?
3. How should Christian communities balance individual liberty with corporate covenant responsibility?

Interlinear Text

וְהִנֵּה ה	קָמְתָּ מ	בְּתַחַת	אֲבֹתֶיךָ מ	וְתָרַב וְ		
H2009	And behold ye are risen up	H8478	in your fathers	stead an increase		
	H6965		H1	H8635		
אֲנָשִׁים	חַטָּאִים	לְסַפּוֹת	עוֹד	עַל	חֲרוֹן	אָף
men	of sinful	to augment	H5750	H5921	yet the fierce	anger
H582	H2400	H5595			H2740	H639
יְהוָה	אֶל	יִשְׂרָאֵל:				
of the LORD	H413	toward Israel				
H3068		H3478				