

Numbers 32:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

Analysis

Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer—(עֲטָרוֹת וְדִבּוֹן וְגַזֵּר)—this catalog of conquered Moabite cities lists eight locations (nine with Elealeh) known for fertile grazing land. Archaeological evidence confirms these were substantial settlements with good water sources. Dibon (modern Dhiban) was Moab's capital; Jazer had 'pleasant' vineyards (Isaiah 16:8-9). The tribal representatives have done their homework—these are choice territories for livestock.

Yet this detailed knowledge reveals their hearts: they've been surveying settlement options east of Jordan while God intended them for Canaan proper. Like Lot choosing the 'well-watered' plain of Jordan (Genesis 13:10-11), they make pragmatic calculations based on visible resources, forgetting that God's promise pointed westward. The specificity of their request—naming nine cities—shows this wasn't a sudden impulse but planned self-interest.

Historical Context

These Transjordan cities lay in territory conquered from Amorite kings Sihon and Og (Numbers 21:21-35). The Mesha Stele (circa 840 BC) confirms Israelite occupation of Dibon, Ataroth, and Nebo during the divided monarchy period.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do detailed plans and careful research sometimes indicate misplaced priorities rather than wise stewardship?
2. When have you focused on 'good enough' options while God intended something better?
3. What role should spiritual discernment play alongside practical assessment in major decisions?

Interlinear Text

אֶלְעָלָה וְחִשְׁבָּה וְנִמְרָה וְחַשְׁבָּה וְנִמְרָה וְחַשְׁבָּה
Ataroth and Dibon and Jazer and Nimrah and Heshbon and Elealeh
H5852 H1769 H3270 H5247 H2809 H500

וְבְּעֵן וְנֵבֶל וְשֵׁבֶט
and Shebam and Nebo and Beon
H7643 H5015 H1194

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 48:34 (Parallel theme): From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.

Joshua 13:17 (Parallel theme): Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon,