

NUMBERS 32-34

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INTRODUCTION¹

The writer is honored to have been asked to contribute to the book at hand. He has long appreciated this congregation of the Lord's church in Schertz, and has full confidence in the lectureships which have been conducted and the works which have been produced by her. It is a privilege to enjoy this association, and the prayer of this writer is that the church and her elders and ministers will be even more fruitful in different areas of work in years to come! What a great set of commentaries the Schertz lectures have provided through the years; it is great to see the culmination of this particular work with this volume on Numbers and Deuteronomy! The subject of this particular chapter is Numbers 32 through 34, summarized thus: division of the land east of the Jordan (Num. 32), the summary of Israel's journeys (Num. 33:1-49), instructions for conquering Canaan (Num. 33:50-56), the boundaries of Canaan (Num. 34:1-15), and dividing Canaan (Num. 34:16-29).

EXEGESIS AND EXPOSITION OF PASSAGE (NUMBERS 32-34)

Numbers 32: Division of the Land East of the Jordan

Verse 1: Twelve tribes of Israel, twelve allotments of land west of the Jordan--this was the plan for the physical land. As Moses was being shown the "Promised Land" before his death, he was shown "all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar" (Deu. 34:1-3); God said, "This *is* the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither" (Deu. 34:4). Interestingly, one might note that Joshua once wished that the land east had been sufficient and Israel content therewith (Jos. 7:7).

The tribes of Reuben and Gad, indeed, were content with the land east of the Jordan; in fact, they were quite pleased with that land! The reason? They "had a very great multitude of cattle." John Gill reasoned, "It seems that they had more [cattle-DFC] in proportion than any of the other tribes; by what means it is not easy to say; very probably they were more addicted to the pastoral life, and took more delight in breeding cattle, and were more diligent in taking care of them."

Jazer and Gilead, mentioned here, were located in the Transjordan [the land east of the River Jordan]. Gill wrote, "Jazer was in the kingdom of Sihon, and Gilead in the kingdom of Og, which had been both conquered by the Israelites." Jazer itself was a "smaller district of rich pastureland" (Lockwood 469) in Ammon, northeast of the Dead Sea. Gilead was a land which, according to some geographers,² stretched from the Dead Sea to Galilee [this option appears most likely], or which, according to others, was located on one or the other or both sides of the River Jabbok.

Verse 2: Those two tribes approached Moses, Eleazar, and the princes--like the ones mentioned by name in Numbers 1:4-16 who "*were* the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel." The tribes began making their case for having the land in the Transjordan.

Verse 3: They mentioned Ataroth and Dibon (east of the Dead Sea), Jazer and Nimrah (northeast of the Dead Sea), Heshbon and Elealah and Shebam (east of the tip of the Dead Sea), Nebo (which lay near the mount of the same name [where Moses died (note Deu. 32:49)]), and Beon (also east of the tip of the Dead Sea [Baalmeon of verse 38]).

Verse 4: "The country which the Lord smote" and "a land of cattle" appear to be appositives renaming the area of verse 3. The worthiness of the land for their occupation was stressed!

Verse 5: Humbly the tribes entreated to be given that land and not that in the land promised.

Verse 6: Moses took for granted that the tribes were trying to excuse themselves from fighting for the Promised Land. Were Reuben and Gad going to sit in fine land while the brethren fought for that in the West? Moses tone comes across as "How could you?"

Verse 7: Moses felt that Reuben and Gad's not fighting for the land of Canaan would discourage the brethren--his language is reminiscent of Caleb's: "Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: ..." (Jos. 14:8).

Verse 8: Moses could fear because he had experienced that to which Caleb referred firsthand--Moses was the one who had sent Caleb and Joshua who had great faith into the land of Canaan to spy it out for entry, but Moses also had sent the other spies (Num. 13:1-20).

Verse 9: Unlike Joshua and Caleb, the ten spies had brought back a fearful, faithless report! They had said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we" (Num. 13:21-33).

Verse 10: The unfaithful spies having melted the heart of the people raised the Lord's ire. The peoples' complaint is heard in Numbers 14:1-4. Moses and Aaron's frustration was exhibited in their falling on their faces before the people (Num. 14:5). Joshua and Caleb tore their garments and told their brethren that they need not fear for they could take the good land if they pleased the Lord and did not rebel against Him (Num. 14:7-9). For their trouble they were threatened with stoning (Num. 14:10). It is no wonder that the Lord spoke thus: "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they" (Num. 14:11,12). Only Moses' intercession saved the people on that occasion (Num. 14:13-19).

Verse 11: God would not destroy and disinherit His people, but He did say, "I have pardoned according to thy word: ... Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:" (Num. 14:20,23). Moses was to tell them, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning* which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num. 14:29,30). While there was

more than that said in the original event, this should suffice to show the anger of the Lord against the unfaithful spies and rebellious people.

Verse 12: Again, Joshua and Caleb, the good spies were spared from the punishment--they would see the Promised Land for they had "wholly followed the LORD." Joshua and Caleb were not alone in seeing the Promised Land, though, for God had said, "But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised" (Num. 14:31).

Verse 13: Regarding the forty years, God had said, "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise " (Num. 14:33,34).

Verse 14: Now Moses turned his attention back to Reuben and Gad whom he deemed were fearful. He reasoned that if these tribes made *this* new generation fear; imagine the anger of the Lord!

Verse 15: Moses likely thought that there would be no intercession for this people if they forsook God again. He would leave all of them in the wilderness to die!

Verse 16: Fear was not the motivating factor for Reuben and Gad, though, for they really merely wanted the land, as they had said, for its agricultural value. They approached Moses and told him that they wanted to leave their cattle and children behind in what would be their possession.

Verse 17: Having prepared for their own return into the Transjordan, they would go over into Canaan with the rest of the children of Israel. More than that, they would go armed--to fight! They just did not want for their own families to be unprotected.

Verse 18: As for those of Reuben and Gad that would cross the Jordan with the rest of Israel, they would not return until the job was done!

Verse 19: Perhaps to ensure Moses that they would not try to take their portion and another, the tribes assured him that their inheritance would only be on the east side of Jordan.

Verse 20: The two tribes had convinced Moses of their plan, but had not convinced Moses that the idea was good or that they would certainly follow through with their end of the deal. Moses' allowance of their plan would be conditional. If they would go armed ...

Verse 21: If they would stay to see the job through ...

Verse 22: Then they could return "guiltless before" both the Lord and Israel and they could rightly possess the land.

Verse 23: The negative of the condition were if they failed to keep their end of the covenant, then they not only would have sinned, but the Lord would have known--it is here that the well known "be sure your sin will find you out" was spoken by Moses.

Verse 24: Whether or not Moses questioned their sincerity is not known, but he did take Reuben and Gad at their word. They could take care of what they needed to and then enter Canaan to fight for their brethren.

Verse 25: Gad and Reuben agreed to the conditions.

Verse 26: The wives were not specifically mentioned, but implied in verses 16 and 17; obviously, they would remain with the children.

Verse 27: Incorporating Moses' words from verse 32, Reuben and Gad would go and fight "before the Lord" as Moses had said.

Verse 28: Moses let those addressed in verse 2 and let Joshua know what had been decided. It seems that Moses may have taken Reuben and Gad aside privately, so here was updating the others; however, they could have heard the whole discussion and now received the "official" decision--especially important given that they would be the ones responsible for dividing the land after Moses' death (Num. 20:12).

Verse 29: The positive terms of condition were laid out--terms allowing them to stay in Gilead--the Transjordan.

Verse 30: The negative terms, which would result in their being in Canaan, were also presented. Keil and Delitzsch wrote "In the latter case, therefore, they were not only to receive no possession in the land to the east of the Jordan, but were to be compelled to go over the Jordan with their wives and children, and to receive an inheritance there for the purpose of preventing a schism of the nation."

Verse 31: Recognizing that Moses spoke for the Lord, Gad and Reuben affirmed for the rest of the audience that they would keep their side of the covenant.

Verse 32: Again, it seems that the rest had not heard the whole conversation, for the two tribes reiterated what their side involved--going armed into Canaan and returning to their justly-received homes.

Verse 33: The land identified in verses 1 through 3 was given by Moses to Reuben and Gad ... "and unto half the tribe of Manasseh" of whom nothing had been said in the earlier discussion. Bill Lockwood wrote,

For the first time the information is given by Moses that the one half tribe of Manasseh is to be included in the trans-jordan [sic-DFC] possessions '*toward the sunrising* [emph. BL].' In subsequent verses the reason is supplied that the families of Manasseh had conquered various portions of Gilead and Bashan (32:39). Moses therefore distributed the newly acquired territory to those who had taken a major role in its subjugation (471).

Verse 34: The claim and settlement (building would certainly include inhabiting what remained from defeated inhabitants) of Gad is given by city. Mention was made earlier of Dibon and Ataroth; Aroer, not mentioned earlier, was located midway up and just east of the Dead Sea.

Verse 35: Assuming Jaazer is, or is part of the Jazer of verse two, the ones introduced here include Atroth and Shophan, which may actually be one. Fausset wrote, "Shophan is appended to the name, and no comma should separate it from Atroth, to distinguish it from the neighboring Ataroth." This would put the location east of the Dead Sea; some would suggest northward toward the Jordan. Jogbehah may have been further north, closer to the Jordan--perhaps even east of it.

Verse 36: Gad also claimed Bethnimrah and Bethharan--fenced cities which would well protect their families while the men fought in Canaan; the locations also provided sheepfolds. These cities appear to be just north of the Dead Sea near the Jordan. The former may be Nimrah of verse 3.

Verse 37: Reuben's settlement included Heshbon and Elealeh, both already mentioned, and Kirjathaim which would seem to be in the same area.

Verse 38: Likely due to their names being drawn from idolatry, Nebo, Baalmeon (likely the same as Beon), and Shibmah (likely the same as Shebam) were occupied and called by new names.

Verse 39: Machir, Manasseh's oldest son (Jos. 17:1), himself took Gilead from the Amorites.

Verse 40: This is why Moses gave Manasseh an allotment in Gad's and Reuben's claim and why mention was made of them in verse 33.

Verse 41: Jair, a descendant of Manasseh--great grandson of Machir (1 Chr. 2:21,22), took more towns for Manasseh and named them for himself, Havothjair, the "hamlets of Jair" (Strong).

Verse 42: Nobah, another Manassite, took Kenath and named it and its villages for himself; ironically, "There can be little doubt that the ancient Kenath is represented by the modern *Kanawāt*, on the western slope of *Jebel ed-Drūze*, the ancient name having survived that of Nobah" (Orr). It appears to have been a good way east of the Sea of Galilee.

Numbers 33:1-49: The Summary of Israel's Journeys

Verse 1: Having shown how it came to be that two and a half tribes would remain east of the Jordan, Moses began to recount how the Children of Israel arrived where they were when they stopped and anticipated entry into Canaan. Albert Barnes wrote, "This list was written ... doubtless as a memorial of God's providential care for His people throughout this long and trying period."

The term "armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron" is an interesting one to describe God's chosen people as they left Egypt. Zodhiates wrote on the word "armies," "It may apply to military service (Num. 1:3; 1 Sam. 17:55); hard, difficult service (Job 7:1; Isa. 40:2); or divine service. ... Over half of its nearly five hundred uses come in the phrase, the Lord [or God] of hosts." Gill wrote on this expression, "In great numbers, and in an orderly manner, in rank and file, and like so many squadrons."

Verse 2: Of Moses' writing of "their goings out according to their journeys," Adam Clarke wrote,

We may consider the whole book of Numbers as a diary, and indeed the first book of travels ever published. Dr. Shaw, Dr. Pococke, and several others, have endeavored to mark out the route of the Israelites, through this great, dreary, and trackless desert, and have ascertained many of the stages here described. Indeed there are sufficient evidences of this important journey still remaining, for the descriptions of many are so particular that the places are readily ascertained by them; but this is not the case with all.

This means that some of this record will be like that of the locations of Numbers 32--location by implication.

Moses' recording the journey was a Divine necessity, for the recording was "by the commandment of the LORD." As a side note, the expression "their goings out" calls to mind the Greek form of Exodus, Ἔξοδος, which means "a way out."

Verse 3: Rameses had been the home of God's people in Goshen (Gen. 47:11). While Adam Clarke suggested it was "the metropolis of the land of Goshen," William Smith was not so certain of its role, writing, "This land of Rameses, either corresponds to the land of Goshen, or was a district of it, more probably, the former"--though in an editor's note he added, "It was, probably, the capital of Goshen, and situated in the valley of the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile." Free identifies Rameses with Tanis (78).

The first month of the Hebrew year [the Hebrew calendar dated (Exo. 12:2) from the events preceding the Passover--for example procuring a lamb for every house on the tenth day of the month (Exo. 12:3)--and the Exodus] was known as Abib (Deu. 16:1) and Nisan (Est. 3:7). On the fifteenth day of the month the children of Israel left Rameses with "an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians." The picture is one of power; Gill wrote, "openly and publicly, with great courage and boldness, without any fear of their enemies; who seeing them march out, had no power to stop them, or to move their lips at them, nay, were willing to be rid of them." The Lord had, indeed, "put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" (Exo. 11:7; cf Exo. 12:33-36).

Verse 4: As the Lord's people saw the horizon, the Egyptians saw death and the grave--the result of the tenth plague (Exo. 12:29,30). From another perspective, the Hebrews were beginning to experience promised freedom, the Egyptians were beginning eternal captivity.

Moses also related that the gods of the Egyptians suffered judgment as well. Joseph Free wrote, "The gods of Egypt were discredited, a purpose indicated in Exodus 12:12; the Nile-god, frog-god, and sun-god were all shown to be powerless before God" (84). In reality, the effect was even greater than these three; the Egyptian gods directly shown powerless included Nilus, Hapi, Khnemu, and Satet--all associated with the Nile; Heka, the frog-headed goddess; Geb, god of the earth; Khepera, the flying beetle, and Shu, god of the air; Apis, the bull-god worshipped in Memphis; Mnevis, a counterpart worshipped in Heliopolis; and Bat the cattle goddess; Tryphon, before whom ashes would be sprinkled; Isis, goddess of water; Osiris, god of fire; Nut, goddess of sky and weather; and Shu, god of the air; Serapis, god of plenty, and Shu, god of the air; Aton the worshiped sun and Ra the sun god; and the Pharaoh, himself considered a god. To this writer, it is interesting to consider that within a century of the Exodus there would arise an Egyptian Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV (1350-1334 B.C.), who would consolidate Egyptian religion into the worship of one god, Aten--he would even change his own name to Akhenaten.

Verse 5: From Rameses the journey was east to Succoth--which seems to have been *all* of a days journey at best comparing various maps of the region and journey. Smith records, "The distance traversed in each day's journey was about fifteen miles"; however, various maps would put these two locations nearly thirty miles from each other. Obviously, Succoth has not been definitively identified.

Verse 6: From Succoth the journey was southward to Etham. Smith indicated this "may be placed where the cultivable land ceases," explaining the expression "which *is* in the edge of the wilderness."

Verse 7: Turning a bit, they traveled south-southeast toward Pihahiroth, Baalzephon, and Migdol where they camped. Pihahiroth may be a location marked by wells (Fausset), Baalzephon by an idol (Gill), and Migdol by a tower (Gill).

Verse 8: Moses was clear in Exodus (Exo. 14:21-31; 15:4,5,19-22; cf Psa. 66:6; 78:13; 106:7-11; 136:13-15; Heb. 11:29) and here that the Israelites went "through the midst of the [Red] sea."^{3,4} Having passed through the sea, Moses led the people through the wilderness for three days to Marah--named for its bitter waters (Exo. 15:23) which were miraculously sweetened (Exo. 15:24-,25).

Verse 9: From thence they continued southeast to Elim, a location of fountains and palms (Exo. 15:27).

Verse 10: The multitude having left Elim, Moses recorded next a camp not mentioned in Exodus and not named. Gill wrote, "This part or arm of the Red sea, whither they came, was six miles from Elim."

Verse 11: From this camp they moved inland through the wilderness of Sin. Of this path, Fausset wrote, "The Egyptians working the copper mines at *Sarbut el Khadim* would keep the route in good order."

Verse 12: Further east they camped in Dophkah--another location not mentioned in the Exodus account.

Verse 13: The next stop, Alush, was also absent from the Exodus account. Referring to Jewish tradition, Gill wrote that this was "where the Israelites came on the fifteenth day of the seventh month from their going out of Egypt; and they say, that in Alush the sabbath was given them, and that there they kept the first sabbath"--Exodus 16, then, would fit here.

Verse 14: From Alush the people marched southward and eastward to Rephidim. This is where Moses first hit a rock to provide water for the murmurers and thus named it also Massah--"temptation" (Brown), and Meribah--"'strife' or 'contention'" (Brown) (Exo. 17:1-7). This is also where they famously first fought the Amalekites (Exo. 17:8-16).

Verse 15: From Rephidim Moses led them eastward into the wilderness of Sinai. In the wilderness of Sinai, at the mount, the Hebrews received their law (Exo. 20) and had numerous other experiences and received numerous other ordinances from God.

Verse 16: From Sinai camping in the wilderness, the Hebrews murmured yet again--and hardly for the last time--for they had tired of manna. They were given quail and a plague, and the place was named Kibrothhattaavah (Num. 11:4-35)--"graves of lust" (Brown).

Verse 17: From thence they traveled north-northeastward to Hazereth.

Verse 18: They continued northeastward to Rithmah.

Verse 19: From Rithmah they continued to Rimmonparez, or, simply, Rimmon.

Verse 20: Next they camped at Libnah, apparently turning more eastward about this time. Gill indicates that around this time the Israelites were traveling about four to eight miles per day.

Verse 21: Continuing, they were led to Rissah.

Verse 22: They moved thence to Kehelath.

Verse 23: Mount Shapher was the next camping spot.

Verse 24: They journeyed next to Haradah. One will note that these sites were without incident or, at least, without Biblically historical significance.

Verse 25: Next they camped at Makheloth.

Verse 26: From Makheloth they traveled to Tahath.

Verse 27: Next they stopped at Tarah. At some point they began, or had begun, moving more northward, but where exactly in this catalog of camps is not known.

Verse 28: Continuing, the Israelites moved to Mithcah.

Verse 29: Hashmonah was the next stop.

Verse 30: Gill has the next stop, Moseroth [some wrongly reason that this is the same as Mosera--where Aaron would ultimately die (Deu. 10:6); Mosera would equate with Mount Hor (Num. 20:25,28)], thirty-two miles away.

Verse 31: Next the Hebrews traveled to Benejaakan where there were wells (Smith).

Verse 32: The next stop was Horhagidgad.

Verse 33: Jotbathah was the next camping spot.

Verse 34: The multitude then stopped at Ebronah.

Verse 35: Eziongaber, or Ezion-geber, what would be a port (2 Chr. 8:17,18; 1 Kin. 22:48) at the head of the Red Sea's right arm, the Gulf of Aqaba, was the next camp.

Verse 36: Traveling northwestward, they moved into the wilderness of Zin, also known as Paran, and Kadesh--Kadeshbarnea--from which the spies were sent into the land (Num. 13:26).

Verse 37: Now, having left Kadesh, they moved northeastward to Mount Hor "in the edge of the land of Edom" [Gill points out that "Kadesh also was" (Num. 20:16)] wherein were the descendants of Esau (Gen. 32:3). The Edomites would be a perpetual thorn in the side of their Hebrew cousins (e.g., 2 Chr. 20:22; Isa. 63:1).

Verse 38: As was mentioned, Aaron died in Mount Hor thirty-nine years and four and a half months after leaving Egypt.

Verse 39: Aaron died at age 123--an age not atypical of that period closer to the flood. One charting the lengths of lives pre- and post-flood will see at the flood the beginning of a gradual shortening so that by David's day seventy may have already been the expected lifespan (Psa. 90:10). At Aaron's death, the priesthood transferred to his third son Eleazar (Num. 20:25,26; Deu. 10:6)--his first two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had died earlier as judgment from God (Lev. 10:1,2).

Verse 40: "King Arad" would more plainly be translated "the king of Arad." Young's Literal translates king Arad as an appositive thus: "And the Canaanite--king Arad--who ..." which appears to be an excellent way to appreciate the meaning. The text indicates that he "heard of the coming of the children of Israel." This is reminiscent of Rahab's knowledge of the Hebrews (Jos. 2:9-11) though more had occurred in the interim. Numbers 21 records the king of Arad's fighting and taking prisoners of Israel (Num. 21:1) before ultimately being destroyed (Num. 21:3); while Rahab did not mention the king of Arad, one might wonder if she may have heard of this victory of God's people as well..

Verse 41: Leaving Mount Hor, the Hebrews camped in Zalmonah.

Verse 42: From thence they traveled to Punon. Smith puts its location between Petra and Zoar in Edom.

Verse 43: The next resting point was Oboth, "probably south of the Dead Sea, on the boundary between Moab and Edom" (Smith).

Verse 44: From Oboth the children of Israel moved to "Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab."

Verse 45: From Iim, the shortened form of Ijeabarim, the Hebrews moved to Dibongad, apparently the Dibon of Numbers 32:2 [the ending "-gad" likely demonstrates the Gadites' ultimate possessing of it].

Verse 46: Traveling on, they camped at Almondiblathaim, which Adam Clarke equated with Bethdiblathaim (Jer. 48:22).

Verse 47: From there they traveled to the mountains of Abarim, "highlands on the east of the Jordan" (Smith), approaching Nebo (mentioned in Numbers 32:3).

Verse 48: Leaving the mountains, they camped "in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho" (Gill indicates Jericho [which lay across the Jordan] was ten miles away).

Verse 49: They camped spread out between Bethjesimoth and Abelshittim. From here they would make their entry into the Promised Land.

Numbers 33:50-56: Instructions for Conquering Canaan

Verse 50: Here, in this latter camp, the Lord addressed Moses.

Verse 51: Moses was to speak to the children of Israel--who would pass over Jordan. Notable in this and the following verses is the second person pronoun "ye." Moses would not be in the number.

Verse 52: All inhabitants, pictures ["figuratively *imagination*" (Strong)], images, and high places were to be conquered. Their aim was complete victory--note the repeated pronoun "all"; however, this was not complete victory for competition's sake. This was victory for good over evil, righteousness over wickedness, truth versus error, God versus any and all that be against Him.

Verse 53: The land was God's to give to whom He would; He had promised it to Abraham (Gen. 12:1) and would give it to Abraham's descendants. Logically, the current inhabitants were only trespassers.

Verse 54: Lots--the falling of which were determined by God (Pro. 16:33)--would determine which tribes received which parts of the land according to population (Num. 26:53-56).

Verse 55: Again, the promise or covenant was conditional. If they failed to do their job, the people of the land would continue to pose problems for the children of Israel. Bible students know exactly what was to come: The Israelites failed (e.g., Jos. 17:13; Jud. 1:28).

Verse 56: What Israel would fail to do would be done to them--as it was many times including 721 B.C. and 586 B.C. when the Jews were carried into captivity by Assyria and Babylon, respectively.

Numbers 34:1-15: The Boundaries of Canaan

Verse 1: Again the Lord spoke to Moses who still commanded the people though he would not enter Canaan himself. The second person pronouns continue through this section.

Verse 2: The coasts, or borders, of the land are here delineated.

Verse 3: The Israelites would possess southward into the wilderness of Zin into Edom on the west side of the Dead Sea and from the southern end of the Salt, or Dead, Sea eastward.

Verse 4: Canaan's southern border west of the Dead Sea would stretch from Akkrabbim [at the southwestern end of the Dead Sea (Orr) in which range may have been Mount Hor (Gill)] through Zin to Kadeshbarnea (of Numbers 33:36) and Hazaraddar [same as either Adar (Gill) or Hazron (Orr)] and Azmon.

Verse 5: From Azmon the border turned southwestward to the river of Egypt, the Wadi el Arish (Barnes) [same as Shihor of Joshua 13:3 (Orr)], which it followed to the Mediterranean Sea. This is not the Nile as some curiously but wrongly suggest, for the Hebrews never ruled or even tried to conquer to that extent.

Verse 6: The Great or Mediterranean Sea was Canaan's western border.

Verse 7: The mount Hor [which simply means "mountain" (Strong)] of this verse is obviously a northern mountain, likely corresponding to Mount Hermon which certainly stood tall at over nine thousand feet and stretched "16 to 20 miles from North to South" (Orr).

Verse 8: From this mountain to Hamath in Syria, well to the north of Mount Hermon and lying on the Orontes River. The location of Zedad is not verified, but probably lay "to the east of the northern extremity of the chain of Anti-Libanus" (Smith).

Verse 9: Ziphron and Hazarenan have not been positively identified, but apparently would have been in that same area, well north of the regions the Hebrews actually conquered entering Canaan.

Verse 10: The eastern borders included not only Hazarenan, but also Shepham to the south.

Verse 11: Further south the border was Riblah which some have associated, perhaps incorrectly (Gill), with Antioch which was also on the Orontes. Ain lay to the west of Riblah, wherever that may have been, and was probably "the main source of the Orontes" (Smith). From there the border went south to the Sea of Chinnereth, or Galilee.

Verse 12: From Chinnereth, the border followed the Jordan to the Dead Sea.

Verse 13: The tribes, save Gad and Reuben and the half of Manasseh, had this land promised to them as would be determined by lot.

Verse 14: Moses alluded to the agreement made in Numbers 32.

Verse 15: Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh already had their reward--contingent upon their fighting on behalf of their brethren (Num. 32:20-22, cf. 32). "Toward the sunrising" effectively gave these tribes no eastern border.

Numbers 34:16-29: Dividing Canaan

Verse 16: Again, the Lord spoke to Moses.

Verse 17: Eleazer and Joshua would be responsible for the dividing of Canaan.

Verse 18: Each tribe would present one prince--who would be identified by God in the following verses. Gill noticed that "the names are mentioned in the exact order in which the tribes obtained possession of the land, and according to *brotherly* connection."

Verse 19: The faithful spy Caleb, son of Jephunneh, represented Judah. His personal inheritance was given in Joshua 14:6-14.

Verse 20: Simeon's representative was Shemuel, the son of Ammihud.

Verse 21: Benjamin had Elidad, son of Chislon, as its representative.

Verse 22: For Dan the representative was Bukki, the son of Jogli.

Verse 23: Joseph's children, Manasseh and Ephraim, had taken his double share (Gen. 48:5,6). Manasseh's representative was Hanniel, the son of Ephod.

Verse 24: Kemuel, the son of Shiphtan, represented Ephraim.

Verse 25: Zebulun was represented by Elizaphan, son of Parnach.

Verse 26: The tribe of Issachar was represented by Paltiel, son of Azzan.

Verse 27: Asher's representative was Ahihud, the son of Shelomi.

Verse 28: Pedahel, son of Ammihud, represented the tribe of Naphtali.

Verse 29: While among these names only Caleb achieved individual fame, these were entrusted with the tribal allotments.

CONCLUSION

This study has considered the division of the land east of the Jordan (Num. 32), the summary of Israel's journeys (Num. 33:1-49), instructions for conquering Canaan (Num. 33:50-56), the boundaries of Canaan (Num. 34:1-15), and dividing Canaan (Num. 34:16-29). Many of the details and names and locations in this section are obscure; however, taken as a whole the recording of them is of value to Christians today who see God's interest in detail, faithfulness to promises, concern for justice, and many other things in them (Rom. 15:4). One would do well, though, to remember that these things were not written for men today, but for that generation who knew these events, locations, and men and who knew their responsibility before the Lord!

ENDNOTES

¹All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

²Unfortunately, many locations in Scripture are not yet [the operative word] definitively identified. This means that different sources may give different locations--and some like Biblical minimalists will argue such places never existed. It is hard to know which sources are best, but generally when there is a good bit of agreement, the majority are on to something. One of the reasons that today there are many places pretty accurately located is the work of Edward Robertson (1794-1863) who identified a couple of hundred--and that largely successfully. This study uses the author's opinion (based on the best sources and information he has found over the years) when a definitive location is not available.

³Sadly, the critic attacks Scripture wherever he sees any hint of weakness. The crossing of the Red Sea is one of the most attacked accounts. From suggesting that the Israelites marched through reeds to suggesting that the crossing was a "miracle in the timing" coinciding with the eruption of Thera (Santorini) and an associated tsunami; the attacks are loud and numerous. One is strongly encouraged to grab an atlas--or better a satellite program like Google Earth--and compare what is there with J.W. McGarvey's firsthand account of the geography of the crossing point. Many questions asked since his journey there in 1879 were actually anticipated and answered in his work *Lands of the Bible* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1881) pages

438-444. McGarvey's work was thorough and excellent! Richard Curry, long time instructor at the Memphis School of Preaching, would relate anecdotally that years after McGarvey had been in the Bible lands a guide was asked if they had ever met. The guide answered, "Yes, he was the one with the measuring tape" [or something to that effect].

4Few Bible atlases picture this correctly. Rand McNally's *Historical Atlas of the Holy Land* (New York, 1938) is one of the better!

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