

INTRO: Read 1 Cor. 10:1-11

1. All the things the Apostle Paul mentions here are what we've been reading about over the last few weeks in Numbers.
2. While fascinating stories in themselves, Paul says God intends them to be **abiding lessons** in our walk with Him.
 - a. These aren't just tales to tell the kids in S/S.
 - b. What happened to ancient Israel is a **pattern**; a **template** for **each** of us.
 - c. We're to **learn** from both Israel's failure & success.
 - d. The lessons they learned **instruct** us.
3. But there's a maxim students of history know well that says, "Those who **fail** to learn the lessons of history are **doomed** to repeat them."
4. So we come to **another** chapter in Israel's history we must learn from in Numbers 32.
5. We begin by setting the stage . . .
 - a. Israel is now camped on the E side of the Jordan River, ready to cross over and conquer Canaan.
 - b. Moses has aged out and is passing the baton of leadership to his protégé, Joshua.
 - c. They'll soon make plans for **how** to take possession of the PL.
 - d. And as they do, 2 of the tribes decide they're happy where they are there on the E side of the Jordan.

Vs1-5

¹ Now the children of Reuben & the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; & when they saw the land of Jazer & the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, ² the children of Gad & the children of Reuben came & spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, & to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ³ "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, & Beon, ⁴ the country which the Lord defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, & your servants have livestock." ⁵ Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."

1. **Q: Where** is the PL? What is its **border**? The Jordan River!
2. They aren't in the PL now; they're **next** to it, but not **in** it.
3. **Q: Where** does God **want** them? Where does His promise **begin**? Just to the W; just across the Jordan.
4. Israel has only conquered this area because the native Amorites who'd taken it from the Moabites attacked them.
 - a. It's a land of good pasturage for the large herds & flocks the tribes of Reuben & Gad lead.
 - b. As the nation gears up to cross into the PL, Reuben & Gad call a meeting of Israel's leadership & say,
 - c. "We want to settle **HERE**; E of the Jordan. This land is good enough."
5. They name 9 cities **now empty** after Israel's conquest & ouster of the Amorites. They're just waiting for new families to move in.

Vs6-15

⁶ And Moses said to the children of Gad & to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? ⁷ Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given them? ⁸ Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ⁹ For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol & saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them. ¹⁰ So the Lord's anger was aroused on that day, & He swore an oath, saying, ¹¹ 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from 20 yrs old & above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, ¹² except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, & Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord.' ¹³ So the Lord's anger was aroused against Israel, & He made them wander in the wilderness 40 yrs, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone. ¹⁴ And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the Lord against Israel. ¹⁵ For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, & you will destroy all these people."

1. Moses was **dumb-struck** by their request It's a bad dream; déjà vu all over again.
2. Though almost 40 yrs have passed, Moses **remembers** Israel's colossal failure at Kadesh like it was yesterday!

3. When the previous generation **balked** at entering the PL thru unbelief, God consigned them to wandering round the wilderness until they died off; leaving it to their **children** to inherit the Promise.
4. Here those children are. And some say **E** of the Jordan is good enough. Their journey is over.
5. Moses knew it **wasn't**. They **belonged** in the PL, not **next** to it! Think of it this way . . .
 - a. Mario & Cindy get married and go on their honeymoon to Maui.
 - b. A week later they fly back to LAX, & drive the Nard.
 - c. Mario's taking his new bride to their new house for the first time.
 - d. As they drive into the neighborhood, she says, "It's gorgeous here. This is much nicer than where I grew up."
 - e. They drive down a street with a park on one side and gorgeous houses on the other.
 - f. He pulls into the driveway of one of the houses, but Cindy's look at the park.
 - g. She throws open the door and runs across the street to the park, doing circles with her arms out in delight.
 - h. Mario stands in the driveway of their new house saying, "Cindy! Come see your new house. Let me carry you across the threshold in **OUR HOME!**"
 - i. But she replies, "Mario – Look at this park! It's Gorgeous! Can I live here?"
6. Cindy is these 2 tribes; Moses is Mario. "Say WHAT?!?!?"
 - a. Why would you want to live in a park when there's a gorgeous house right here next to it.
 - b. As nice as the park is, this house is "way mo-betta."
 - c. E Jordan was nice; but it wasn't the Promise.
 - d. It wasn't where God had made clear His people were to settle.

Vs16-24

¹⁶Then they came near to him & said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, & cities for our little ones, ¹⁷but we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; & our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸We will not return to our homes until every 1 of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. ¹⁹For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan & beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

1. The men of Reuben & Gad promise to help the other tribes secure their inheritance across the Jordan before settling down in the East.

2. They just needed a little time to make sure their wives & kids were setup first.

3. Then they'd cross over with the other tribes & help in the coming conflict with the Canaanites.

²⁰Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, ²¹and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, ²²and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you may return & be blameless before the Lord & before Israel; & this land shall be your possession before the Lord. ²³But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; & be sure your sin will find you out. ²⁴Build cities for your little ones & folds for your sheep, & do what has proceeded out of your mouth."

3. Moses agrees to the compromise.

a. If Reuben & Gad will join the other tribes in securing Canaan, they can come back to settle in the E.

b. It's not what Moses preferred, but he **agrees** to it Because . . .

c. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.

4. LISTEN: God wants so much for His people.

a. His love is astounding. His grace, amazing.

b. His plan & purpose magnificent!

c. Nothing less than glory awaits those who surrender completely to Him.

d. But God doesn't force us.

e. Having given us the power to chose, He honors the choices we make.

5. In the final analysis, Relationships are EVERYTHING and **Love is the bottom line.**

a. For love to be real, it has to be free; Free to chose.

b. So God gives us the capacity to chose; those choices bearing real consequences, or it wouldn't be real.

c. God's love for us desires to bless us, eternally and now!

- d. But we have to choose it, to accept it.
 - e. God woo us, seeks to persuade us; but in the end, it's up to us how we'll respond to that wooing.
 - f. God's wooing some of you right now. [elab]
6. Reuben & Gad KNEW God's promise and where blessing lay.
- a. But they looked around E Jordan & said, "This is good enough; close enough."
 - b. "We may have not gone all the way into the Promise, but we've come far enough in our journey and are willing to settle down here. No— We WANT to settle here. We WILL settle here."
 - c. And God says, "So be it."

Far Enough

1. Reuben & Gad live on among the people of God.
2. Many are those who start their spiritual journey by coming to faith in Christ.
 - a. They make some progress in their walk with God.
 - b. They have some victories in overcoming their own internal Amorites.
 - c. And they sense the HS calling them further, deeper.
 - d. But they feel they've gone far enough.
 - e. They've got fire insurance; they aren't going to hell
 - f. But when the Spirit says, "Let's press on! Let's go after the big boys now; the Canaanites and giants."
 - g. They say, "No. This is good. I'll just settle down here.
 - h. I know that's a lot more I could have in Christ, but this is enough; at least for now.
 - i. Maybe later, when I'm older, I'll get more serious about God and my walk."
3. Christian: Please hear me. God intends eternal life to begin, not after you die, but the moment you're born again.
 - a. His promise doesn't start in Heaven; it's already started.
 - b. Don't compromise & settle for the pasture of E Jordan.
 - c. KEEP following the Spirit into ALL God has for you.
 - d. Press in to the Promise. DON'T SETTLE!

Danger

1. Moses saw the ***danger*** Reuben & Gad's ***compromise*** was to the other tribes.
 - a. He knew unbelief is a spiritual infection that can spread to others. And indeed it did.
 - b. A little further on in the ch we learn half of Manasseh ***joined*** Reuben & Gad in settling E Jordan.
2. A sure way to discourage a zealous believer is to surround her/him with the apathetic, lukewarm, & compromised.
3. When I read this story of Reuben & Gad, I think of Jesus' msg to the lukewarm Laodiceans in Rev3.
 - a. They were so compromised, so spiritually dull, they didn't even realize Jesus had left.
 - b. If you're ***struggle*** in your walk, let me ask a question: Who do you hang out with?
 - c. Are your friends the complacent Reuben & Gad or are you hanging out with Joshua & Caleb who are itching to get at it; to get over that Jordan and into the Promise?
4. Later in Israel's history, guess who the first tribes to get conquered and carried away into captivity were. Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh.

CONCLUSION

1. I want to end by echoing Moses. Christian: Don't settle.
2. Don't content yourself with an E Jordan life.
3. Don't compromise by keeping one foot in the world and another in God's Kingdom.
4. Go All In!
5. No: The Pressed In life isn't easy.
 - a. There are battles to fight, because God's plan it to make you victor.
 - b. And there's no victory without a fight.
6. All I can do is ***urge & encourage*** you.
 - a. There's no arm twisting. No coercion, force, manipulation.
 - b. That's not how the Spirit of God works.
 - c. His tools are grace and truth.
7. But in the end, YOU have to choose. Choose Life!

Phil 3:12–19

1. These words I say to you I say to myself. I preach this msg to me too.

2. For some time I've been profoundly moved by what the Apostle Paul says in Phil 3

¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame— who set their mind on earthly things.