

# The Book of Numbers

## Lesson 19

### Chapters 31 - 32

Seven more times the text will say, “**then the LORD spoke to Moses.**” Each one important! We would think that because the LORD had told Moses that he was about to leave this earth that He would be letting the old man enjoy his last days here, but not so. We would also think that because Moses was 120 years old, the LORD would not tax him with another skirmish, but He did.

#### Moses Leads Battle Against Midianites

**Num 31:1** Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, **31:2** "Take full vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered to your people." **31:3** Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the LORD'S vengeance on Midian. **31:4** "A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war." **31:5** So there were furnished from the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

We must wonder how much of this plan was from the lips of the LORD or if He had enough confidence in Moses to allow him to make the assignment on his own. We will never know this side of heaven! Nevertheless, the order was for a thousand men from each tribe - no more, no less. We do not know how they selected the men. It is probably good that we do not know. If we did, it would have become a prescription for all sorts of rabble-rousing in the years following the completion of the Bible. Can you imagine that every time the church needed an army of volunteers, they would go to the method used here and apply it? Crazy things have happened. I have heard of a church that selected its leaders by how they drank water thanks to the story of Gideon in the book of Judges. Here, the target was the Midianites. What in the world could have been going on in Moses' mind? His two sons were half Midian, his first wife was a Midianite, he had spent forty years among the Midians. Emotions must have been high for Moses. "Execute the LORD's vengeance on Midian." Those are powerful words. Failure to do as the LORD commanded could have had devastating consequences regardless of Moses' personal feelings.

#### 12,000 and Phinehas Sent to War Against Midianites

**Num 31:6** Moses sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the war, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war with them, and the holy vessels and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. **31:7** So they made war against Midian, just as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they killed every male. **31:8** They killed the kings of Midian along with the *rest of* their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. **31:9** The sons of Israel captured the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods they plundered. **31:10** Then they burned all their cities where they lived and all their camps with fire. **31:11** They took all the spoil and all the prey, both of man and of beast. **31:12** They brought the captives and the prey and the spoil to Moses,

and to Eleazar the priest and to the congregation of the sons of Israel, to the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

The destruction of the Midianites was not a total annihilation. The women and children were saved. When the text says, “**killed every male,**” the warriors interpreted that to mean all the males of age to fight which would be 20 years of age and older. Also, the animals were spared. Where the text uses the word “**plunder,**” it does not mean they were killed, here it means they were captured. How do we know that? The text says, “**They brought the captives and the prey and the spoil to Moses.**” The “**captives**” were the women and children. The “**prey**” meant the animals. The “**spoil**” meant the valuable goods of gold, silver, tools, weapons, etc.

Phinehas led the charge with the silver trumpets and the Holy vessels of the Tabernacle complex. What were the “**Holy vessels?**” These would have been the fire-pans loaded with incense and the trumpets carried by the priest and the Levites charged with the duty of their care.

Five of the Midianite kings died. We should think about them as kings of clans within the Midianite tribe. There were surely other Midianite kings and clans not affected by this war. Neither Moses’ father-in-law nor his brother-in-law was killed in this event. For one reason, they were miles away in the southern region of the land of Midian. We also see in this passage that Balaam died too. How was he tied up in this mess? Had he not gone home? Yes he had! But this battle was against the Midianites who lived in the surrounding area, including Balaam’s home town at the corner of the Jabbok River and the east side of the Jordan.

When the battle was completed, when the towns were plundered, when the women and children were collected, they were marched to Moses and the camp of Israel on the east side of the Jordan River about 10 miles from Jericho.

### **Return with Spoils**

**Num 31:13** Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp.

No doubt, the march of twelve thousand men with all the animals, women and children caused quite a dust storm as they marched to the west. No doubt, Moses and Eleazar were expecting a resounding victory. The victory was Israel’s, but not without consequences.

### **Anger of Moses Because of Women Spoils**

**Num 31:14** Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. **31:15** And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? **31:16** "Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD. **31:17** "Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately. **31:18** "But all the girls who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves.

The marching orders originally given by Moses must not have been communicated clearly. The women and children were not to be spared. These women were the ones who caused the problem just days before recorded after the story of Balaam and his talking donkey. These women were Baal worshipers. As a matter of fact, here we see Balaam's name again in connection with Balaam, Balak and Baal debacle we studied before. When these women tempted Israel to worship Baal, twenty-four thousand Israelites and at least one Midianite princess were judged in that disgraceful event. Moses was now angry with Phinehas and the twelve thousand soldiers returning with him. The order was communicated once again and all the males were to die, regardless of their age. All women were to die except those who had never had a sexual relationship with a man. Furthermore, all girls were to die except those who had never had a sexual relationship with a man. We must wonder how they found that out? Did they stand before the Urim and the Thummin and drink the special potion of dust and water and wait to see if they showed the special sign. We are not told the answer to that question here. Why were those who had not participated in a sexual relationship saved? They could be adopted and molded into God honoring women who loved the LORD.

The statement, **“these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor,”** is troubling. We read through that story. We saw that Balaam blessed the Nation of Israel. How then was it that he was accused by the LORD of trespassing against Him in the Peor matter? Here is the answer. When Balak, king of Moab, took Balaam up on the first mountain to look at the sprawling Nation of Israel, Balaam instructed Balak to build seven altars and sacrifice seven bulls. Balak worshipped Baal. Balaam was a prophet of the LORD. Balaam did not instruct Balak to worship the LORD; rather, he allowed Balak to continue his worship of Baal. He encouraged it! He should have discouraged it. On the second mountain he did the same thing with seven altars and seven bulls. He missed his chance to win a victory for the LORD and change Balak's heart to follow the God of Balaam. Then, once again, on the third mountain Balaam commanded seven altars and seven bulls. Twenty-one offerings and twenty-one bulls and not one directed to the LORD. Balaam was an unfaithful servant of God. Balaam's shortcoming bolstered the worship of that pagan god and his actions encouraged the people to heighten their worship of Baal. It was a deadly mistake.

### **Uncleanness for Seven Days**

**Num 31:19** "And you, camp outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves, you and your captives, on the third day and on the seventh day. **31:20** "You shall purify for yourselves every garment and every article of leather and all the work of goats' *hair*, and all articles of wood."

The Law was the law! Anyone who had touched a dead body was unclean for seven days. The Law provided a process for purification. All twelve thousand men and all the women who were saved had to participate in the process and that included their clothing.

### **Instruction from Eleazar Concerning Spoils**

**Num 31:21** Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to battle, "This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded Moses: **31:22** only the gold and the

silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead, <sup>31:23</sup> everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water. <sup>31:24</sup> "And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may enter the camp."

These days in Christianity we often hear words “purifying fire or refiner’s fire.” The genesis of that thought comes from the Old Testament and passages like this. For the cleaning of the spoils, to the fire they went only if they could withstand the heat and then they were quenched in water. If fire would destroy them, they were saved from the fire but sentenced to a bath. Only then, after the whole process was completed and the seven days had ended, could the soldiers return to the camp and their families.

### Accounting of Booty

Num <sup>31:25</sup> Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, <sup>31:26</sup> "You and Eleazar the priest and the heads of the fathers' *households* of the congregation take a count of the booty that was captured, both of man and of animal; <sup>31:27</sup> and divide the booty between the warriors who went out to battle and all the congregation.

Notice here that the warriors received part of the booty as a reward but all the congregation did too. The victory against the Midianites was not just for the soldiers, it was for the whole Nation of Israel and that is the way it should have been.

### Tax for the LORD

Num <sup>31:28</sup> "Levy a tax for the LORD from the men of war who went out to battle, one in five hundred of the persons and of the cattle and of the donkeys and of the sheep; <sup>31:29</sup> take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest, as an offering to the LORD. <sup>31:30</sup> "From the sons of Israel's half, you shall take one drawn out of every fifty of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys and of the sheep, from all the animals, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." <sup>31:31</sup> Moses and Eleazar the priest did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The passage called for a “**tax**” to be levied, but it was not a tax at all, it was a tribute, an offering, a gift to the LORD from the spoils. The spoils had been divided and the warriors had their share, the rest of the congregation had their share, and now it was time for the LORD to have His share. The priest and Levites were the representatives of the LORD and this was the only way for them to receive a gift from the spoils. What was the final count of the spoils? The Scripture is not silent at all.

### Final Count

Num <sup>31:32</sup> Now the booty that remained from the spoil which the men of war had plundered was 675,000 sheep, <sup>31:33</sup> and 72,000 cattle, <sup>31:34</sup> and 61,000 donkeys, <sup>31:35</sup> and of human beings, of the women who had not known man intimately, all the persons were 32,000. <sup>31:36</sup> The half, the portion of those who went out to war, was *as follows*: the number of sheep was 337,500, <sup>31:37</sup> and the LORD'S levy of the sheep was 675; <sup>31:38</sup> and the cattle were 36,000, from which the LORD'S levy was 72; <sup>31:39</sup> and the donkeys were 30,500,

from which the LORD'S levy was 61; <sup>31:40</sup> and the human beings were 16,000, from whom the LORD'S levy was 32 persons. <sup>31:41</sup> Moses gave the levy *which was* the LORD'S offering to Eleazar the priest, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>31:42</sup> As for the sons of Israel's half, which Moses separated from the men who had gone to war— <sup>31:43</sup> now the congregation's half was 337,500 sheep, <sup>31:44</sup> and 36,000 cattle, <sup>31:45</sup> and 30,500 donkeys, <sup>31:46</sup> and the human beings were 16,000— <sup>31:47</sup> and from the sons of Israel's half, Moses took one drawn out of every fifty, both of man and of animals, and gave them to the Levites, who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The sheer magnitude of the spoils captured in this battle is astounding by any imagination. The defeated Midianites were not poor by any means; they were wealthy! With all of that newfound wealth, the LORD required an offering as a tax or rather a tribute. What should it be? Here it is: 675 sheep, 72 cattle, 61 donkeys, 32 humans. All of that came from the warrior's portion.

But from the congregation, a tax or levy was also due. Here it is: 675 sheep, 72 cattle, 61 donkeys, 32 humans. It was the same requirement as from the warriors.

The formula that was employed in this offering was simple, one was selected from every fifty.

### **Accounting of the Army**

**Num 31:48** Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, approached Moses, <sup>31:49</sup> and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a census of men of war who are in our charge, and no man of us is missing.

Amazingly, the battle had happened and the army did not know if an Israelite had been killed. In all the excitement they had not noticed if one had fallen. They had not taken the time to bury a comrade. Why? Not one Israelite died in the battle! The LORD had protected them all. It was the LORD's battle with the Midianites and when the battle is in God's will, the warriors will be safe from harm.

### **Offering of Gold to the LORD**

**Num 31:50** "So we have brought as an offering to the LORD what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD." <sup>31:51</sup> Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all kinds of wrought articles. <sup>31:52</sup> All the gold of the offering which they offered up to the LORD, from the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, was 16,750 shekels. <sup>31:53</sup> The men of war had taken booty, every man for himself. <sup>31:54</sup> So Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it to the tent of meeting as a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD.

This offering came from the spoils. Here, the gold was weighed and numbered and a tithe given of 16,750 shekels. Multiply that by 90 and you will have an idea of just how much gold these twelve thousand warriors brought back to the camp. Think of it this way. Each warrior may have

carried back about 125 shekels of gold. This offering belonged to the LORD and it was delivered to the tent of meeting.

## Request of Reuben and Gad

**Num 32:1** Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was indeed a place suitable for livestock, **32:2** the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, **32:3** "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon, **32:4** the land which the LORD conquered before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." **32:5** 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 across the Jordan."

The Nation of Israel had captured the land on the east side of the Jordan River from the Dead Sea in the south to Mount Hermon in the north. The southern half was called the **"land of Jazer;"** it was originally Ammon's land that was then taken by the Amorites and then, in the last few months, taken by Israel from King Sihon. The northern half may also have been owned by Ammon but was then taken by King Og and his Amorite tribesmen. Here it is called **"the land of Gilead"** but, as we will see later in this lesson, that was Israel's name for it, not Og's. It, too, had been taken by Israel in the last few months. Especially to the north, these lands were extremely lush and green compared to what the Israelites had been accustomed to all their lives down at Mount Sinai.

The tribes of Gad and Reuben set their eyes on this land and wanted it to be theirs. The names of **"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon,"** represent some of the more desirable villages taken by Israel when Kings Sihon and Og were conquered. We do not know the origin of these names, whether they are Hebrew or Amorite; however, these names are used later in Scripture as well as in external historical sources. The tribes of Gad and Reuben want the **"the land of Jazer"** and **"the land of Gilead"** to be their inheritance in the Promised Land.

## Question from Moses

**Num 32:6** But Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves sit here? **32:7** "Now why are you discouraging the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land which the LORD has given them? **32:8** "This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. **32:9** "For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the sons of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. **32:10** "So the LORD'S anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, **32:11** 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, **32:12** except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.' **32:13** "So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed. **32:14** "Now behold, you have risen

up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the LORD against Israel. <sup>32:15</sup> "For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

As always, it seems, the old people bring up the past! Only Joshua and Caleb understood the problem Moses was addressing with his question and concern with the request of Reuben and Gad. All the rest of the men were too young to remember much about the event that changed the course of the exodus 38 years before. It seems that Moses had grasped the intent of Reuben and Gad, thinking they wanted the land they had just taken and that they would then let the other 10 tribes go on to capture their land without their help. Moses put a name on that kind of thinking and what it would do to the rest of the Nation of Israel. He called it **"discouragement."**

Moses blamed the 10 spies that returned from the venture into the Promised Land 38 years before with discouraging the people from trusting the LORD and continuing to follow Him into the land He had promised. Back then it was for failure to continue for the sake of the whole nation and the same is true in this passage. Moses was accusing Reuben and Gad of failing to continue the battle for the sake of the whole nation.

Obviously, Moses had been through this same kind of thing before. He could have said, "Oh well, I will be dead soon. Let the idiots bail out and leave the other ten tribes to their own devices. The LORD will punish them like He did their fathers. Every nation needs a good punishment here or there!" Moses could have taken that position, but he did not. He had been on this journey for 40 years and he knew and understood the LORD's purpose. This was a warning to Reuben and Gad. How they responded to the warning would determine the LORD's blessing or cursing in their future.

### **Reuben and Gad will Fight with Israel for All of Promised Land**

<sup>Num 32:16</sup> Then they came near to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones; <sup>32:17</sup> but we ourselves will be armed ready *to go* before the sons of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. <sup>32:18</sup> "We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance. <sup>32:19</sup> "For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east."

Reuben and Gad got the message! They would not leave their 10 brothers without their help. They were in for the fight and they would not rest from war until all the tribes had their inheritance in the Promised Land. They made the right choice.

Notice they quickly explained their plan to Moses. They would divide the land, build their fortresses and enclose their sheepfolds where their wives, children and animals would be safe. Then, they would carry on across the Jordan with the other tribes and fight by their side until the battle was won for the whole Nation of Israel. We must wonder, did they have any idea that it would take seven years?

## Moses Agrees

**Num 32:20** So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, **32:21** and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven His enemies out from before Him, **32:22** and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you shall return and be free of obligation toward the LORD and toward Israel, and this land shall be yours for a possession before the LORD. **32:23** "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out. **32:24** "Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and sheepfolds for your sheep, and do what you have promised." **32:25** The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands. **32:26** "Our little ones, our wives, our livestock and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead; **32:27** while your servants, everyone who is armed for war, will cross over in the presence of the LORD to battle, just as my lord says." **32:28** So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *households* of the tribes of the sons of Israel. **32:29** Moses said to them, "If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, everyone who is armed for battle, will cross with you over the Jordan in the presence of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; **32:30** but if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." **32:31** The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. **32:32** "We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance *shall remain* with us across the Jordan."

The plan of Reuben and Gad came on the heels of the LORD's big speech through Moses about keeping the vow and oath. The promise of Reuben and Gad were just that. If they failed to keep their promise it would be a sin and the LORD would surely punish them. Here is their oath: **"As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan."** The whole nation heard it, the whole nation knew it, the whole nation expected it and nothing about that really mattered. Why? Because the LORD had heard it and He is the only One who really matters. If they did not keep their promise to their brothers, He would be the One punishing them. The last thing that we ever want to happen is to be punished by the LORD.

## Distribution of Land on East Side of Jordan

**Num 32:33** So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with *their* territories, the cities of the surrounding land.

How is it that things do not always turn out the way they were intended? Reuben and Gad had asked for all the land. They wanted it all for themselves, but the land was too big for them. A third tribe was needed. Which tribe was selected? It was Manasseh, but the land that was left was not big enough for Manasseh, it would hold only half of that tribe. So, half of that tribe it would be.

Back in Numbers 26, the acreage for each tribe in the Promised Land had been determined and explained. We charted that out according to the Scripture and here is the chart we created.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tribe of	<i>Reuben</i>	<i>Simeon</i>	<i>Judah</i>	<i>Issachar</i>	<i>Zebulun</i>	<i>Ephraim</i>
Second Census of Men	43,730	22,200	76,500	64,300	60,500	32,500
Acres per Tribe	524,760	266,400	918,000	771,600	726,000	390,000
Square Miles per Tribe	819.94	416.25	1,434.38	1,205.63	1,134.38	609.38

	7	8	9	10	11	12
Tribe of	<i>Manasseh</i>	<i>Benjamin</i>	<i>Dan</i>	<i>Asher</i>	<i>Gad</i>	<i>Naphtali</i>
Second Census of Men	52,700	45,600	64,400	53,400	40,500	45,400
Acres per Tribe	632,400	547,200	772,800	640,800	486,000	544,800
Square Miles per Tribe	988.13	855.00	1,207.50	1,001.25	759.38	851.25

Reuben was promised 524,760 acres or about 829 square miles. Gad was promised 486,000 acres or about 759 square miles. Now Moses inserted half of the tribe of Manasseh which, after dividing their allotment in half, was promised 316,200 acres or about 494 square miles. The three together were a perfect fit for the land on the east side of the Jordan.

The actual boundaries of the three tribal areas seem strange. Why are they not definite lines west to east from the Jordan? Why does East Manasseh swoop down into Gad's land like it does? Actually, the dividing lines are definite; they follow the natural rivers and valleys of the landscape which provide permanent landmarks for each tribe.



### Gad

Num 32:34 The sons of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, <sup>32:35</sup> and Atroth-shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, <sup>32:36</sup> and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep.

The Gadites built eight fortress cities for their families and animals to live in while they were gone.

### Reuben

Num 32:37 The sons of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kiriathaim, <sup>32:38</sup> and Nebo and Baal-meon—their names being changed—and Sibmah, and they gave *other* names to the cities which they built.

The Reubenites built six fortress cities for their families and animals to live in while they were gone.

### Manasseh

Num 32:39 The sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. <sup>32:40</sup> So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it. <sup>32:41</sup> Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its towns,

and called them Havvoth-jair. <sup>32:42</sup> Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah after his own name.

Up in the north, in the land of Basham given to half the tribe of Manasseh, not all the Amorites had been killed as in the lands appropriated to Reuben and Gad. Manasseh’s tribesmen had to deal with them when they arrived. Evidently, the major towns in this area were already fortified because Moses does not record that they built the towns, rather that they took the towns to live in.

The East Manasseh area was divided among three sons of Machir. In Numbers 26:28-34 we found the registry of the sons of Machir. In the chart we created at that time we discovered the following:

Manasseh	Machir	Gilead	Iezer (Iezerites) <sup>30</sup>	
52,700	(Machirites) <sup>28</sup>	(Gileadites) <sup>29</sup>	Helek (Helekites) <sup>31</sup>	
			Asriel (Asrielites) <sup>32</sup>	<u>Mahlah</u>
			Shechem(Shechemites) <sup>33</sup>	<u>Noah</u>
				<u>Hoglah</u>
				<u>Milcah</u>
			Hepher (Hepherites) <sup>34</sup>	Zelophehad <u>Tirzah</u>

Here we encounter a problem. According to Numbers 26, the sons of Manasseh were – Machir, only one son. According to our passage in Numbers 32, the sons of Manasseh were – Machir, Jair and Nobah, three sons. We cannot find an answer as to why Jair and Nobah were not mentioned in the lineage of Manasseh in Numbers 26. However, it seems only right to make that adjustment to the family in light of this passage and the chart should reflect that as follows.

Manasseh	Machir	Gilead	Iezer (Iezerites) <sup>30</sup>	
52,700	(Machirites) <sup>28</sup>	(Gileadites) <sup>29</sup>	Helek (Helekites) <sup>31</sup>	
	<b>Jair</b>		Asriel (Asrielites) <sup>32</sup>	<u>Mahlah</u>
			Shechem(Shechemites) <sup>33</sup>	<u>Noah</u>
				<u>Hoglah</u>
				<u>Milcah</u>
	<b>Nobah</b>		Hepher (Hepherites) <sup>34</sup>	Zelophehad <u>Tirzah</u>

Here we also learn that the land called “**Gilead**” previously in this book was not its original name; it was the name given when the son of Machir took the land as his part of the inheritance in the Promised Land. In other words, the Bible does not memorialize the names of the cities and villages by their Canaanite names but by their Hebrew names. Had Moses recorded the land of Gilead as the land of Og, for all times the Israelites would have been reminded of Og of the Amorites rather than Gilead of Israel. Moses, for instance, did that in the book of Genesis on many occasions. For instance, the original name for the village of Bethel was Luz, but for clarity, he called it Bethel in the story line long before it was renamed Bethel by Jacob.