Possessing Your Promised Land

**3––EVERYONE MUST CROSS**

May 15, 2022

**LET’S OPEN OUR BIBLES TO TWO PLACES… DEUT. 8 & NUMBERS 32**

**Deuteronomy 8:1 (NKJV)** “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may **live** and **multiply**, and **go in** and **possess** the land of **which the Lord swore** to your fathers.

**INTRODUCTION:** Have you ever been in a situation that you really wanted to change, but the change required everyone’s participation? Maybe you were in a car with the whole family, and you were really craving the food at a particular restaurant, and everyone else agreed to go there, except one person who said it didn’t sound good. What if it was more consequential? What if you were in a marriage that desperately needed improvement, but whenever you asked your spouse to do something to work on it, they said “no, everything is fine?” What if it was a much larger group of people, including many people who don’t even know each other, but where the various members would have to participate to make the change, like restoring morality back to our nation or protecting the innocence of children, but many just didn’t want to?

God has always called His people to function differently than the rest of the world. And the process He uses to make them different is that He speaks to them and tells them what He wants them to do. And if they do it, He blesses them with His divine power and favor.

The story we’re going to look at today is one such scenario, and it’s very serious. The children of Israel had been marching around the wilderness for 40 years. Think about that, 40 years before God was ready to take them into the Promised Land, but many of them chose to make their own decisions and follow their own preferences, desires, emotions, and fears, instead of trusting God and doing what He was telling them to do. And now here are their children, 40 years later, and they have the same decision to make. Who gets to decide what we do? Is it God, or is it us? And believe it or not, this 3,500-year-old story relates to what God is saying and doing with us today… and it’s very serious!

**LET’S LOOK NOW AT NUMBER 32**

**Numbers 32:1–5 (NKJV)** Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, **2** the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, **… [And verse 3 names 9 territories on the East side of the Jordan River]**  **Verse 4** the country which the Lord defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and 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.”

**SOMETIMES EVEN THE BEST OF PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES NOT WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN A CORPORATE VISION… SOMETIMES THEY DON’T WANT TO CROSS THE JORDAN BECAUSE WE LIKE THE LAND WE ALREADY HAVE OR FEEL CALLED TO WHAT WE’RE ALREADY DOING … AND OTHER TIMES THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SIMPLY MAKE PARTICIPATING INCONVENIENT OR EVEN COUNTERPRODUCTIVE… AND IT’S NOT UNREASONABLE TO HAVE THOSE THOUGHTS.**

**BUT HERE’S SOMETHING WE NEED TO REMEMBER… THOUGH EACH OF US HAS AN INDIVIDUAL CALLING FROM GOD, NONE OF US ARE CALLED TO WORK IN ISOLATION… AND GOD CALLS GROUPS OF PEOPLE, SUCH AS A CHURCH OR A MINISTRY, TO WORK AND MOVE TOGETHER IN COLLABORATION.**

**AND RIGHT NOW… WE ARE ON A JOURNEY WITH JESUS … AND IN THIS JESUS’ CHURCH GROUP STUDY HE IS GOING TO EXPLAIN TO US–– WEEK BY WEEK––THINGS HE TAUGHT HIS OWN DISCIPLES. AND AS HE TEACHES US, AND AS WE FOLLOW HIM, OUR LIVES WILL GROW MORE AND MORE MEANINGFUL, AND OUR ABILITY TO IMPACT THE WORLD WILL CONTINUALLY INCREASE.**

**LET’S SEE HOW MOSES RESPONDED…**

**Numbers 32:6–15 (NKJV)** And Moses said to the children of Gad and 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 and 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, and He swore an oath, saying, **11** ‘Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, **12** except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord.’ **13** So the Lord’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, 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, and you will destroy all these people.”

**NOW… IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12, THE APOSTLE PAUL LISTS NINE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT… ONE OF THEM IS THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES… MOSES WAS SPEAKING HEBREW, BUT ALLOW ME TO INTERPRET WHAT MOSES SAID TO THEM IN TWO WAYS:**

1. **HE SAID… “HECK NO… YOU IDIOTS!”**
2. **HE SAID… “NO WAY, BECAUSE WHEN YOUR BRETHREN FIND OUT THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING OVER THE JORDAN WITH US TO HELP US FIGHT THE BATTLE GOD HAS CALLED US TO FIGHT, THEIR HEARTS WILL GET DISCOURAGED… AND SOME OF THEM WILL SAY, ‘YOU KNOW WHAT, I’M GOING TO STAY HERE TOO.’ AND THEN WE WILL HAVE DISOBEYED GOD… AGAIN… AND HE WILL LEAVE US ALL HERE IN THE WILDERNESS”**

**IF GOD’S PLAN WAS ONLY ABOUT YOU OR ME, OUR EXCUSES AND REASONS MAY BE ENOUGH NOT TO PARTICIPATE… BUT GOD’S PLAN IS MUCH, MUCH BIGGER THAN WHAT ANY OF US SEE.**

**SO MOSES DID NOT LET THEM OFF THE HOOK**

**[Add examples of how some people’s lack of participation was unnecessarily costly to the entire family, company, team, etc.]**

**SOME SCENARIOS ARE MORE CONSEQUENTIAL THAN OTHERS BECAUSE IT IS A VISION AND PLAN THAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED.**

**LET’S SEE HOW THESE TWO TRIBES RESPONDED…**

**Numbers 32:16–18 (NKJV)** Then they came near to him and said: “We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, **17** but we ourselves will be armed, ready to go before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. **18** We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance.

**IN ESSENCE, THEY SAID, “EVEN THOUGH WE FEEL THAT OUR LAND (CALLING) IS HERE, ON THIS SIDE OF THE JORDAN, WE WILL SET THINGS UP HERE AND MAKE PREPARATIONS TO GO ACROSS THE JORDAN AND HELP EVERYONE FIGHT AND WIN THE BATTLE GOD HAS CALLED US TO FIGHT.**

**LET’S SEE MOSES’ RESPONSE…**

**Numbers 32:20–23 (NKJV)** Then Moses said to them: “If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, **21** and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, **22** and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. **23** But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.

**IF YOU WILL CROSS THE JORDAN WITH US AND HELP US TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION GOD HAS GIVEN US, THEN YOU ARE FREE TO COME BACK TO THE TERRITORY ON YOU LIKE ON THIS SIDE OF THE JORDAN.**

**LET ME INTERPRET ONCE AGAIN… MOSES SAID, IF YOU DON’T CROSS OVER, YOU ARE SINNING AGAINST THE LORD, AND BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.**

**HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO JESUS’ CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST?**

**JESUS IS SPEAKING TO HIS ENTIRE CHURCH WORLDWIDE… HE IS CALLING EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE BODY OF CHRIST… AND EVERY ONE OF HIS MINISTRIES… TO FOLLOW HIM.**

**THE WORLD IS GETTING DARKER AND DARKER, AND JESUS IS CALLING HIS CHURCH TO ARISE AND SHINE BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER… THAT, HOWEVER, REQUIRES SOME CHANGES… CHANGES THAT NOT EVERYONE WANTS TO MAKE… BUT WE MUST!**

**OKAY, LET’S NOW TALK ABOUT US… WE’RE IN A DIFFERENT SCENARIO THAN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, BUT BOY DOES THIS RELATE TO US.**

**WHEN GOD CALLS PEOPLE TOGETHER TO BE PART OF A CHURCH OR MINISTRY, HE GIVES THEM A VISION… AN ASSIGNMENT… AND NO ONE IS CALLED JUST TO COME AND RECEIVE.**

**Ephesians 4:16 (NIV mod) says,** “The whole body… grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

**SO GOD CALLS EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE… THAT’S HOW WE GROW… THAT’S HOW WE’RE BUILT UP… AND THAT’S HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR ASSIGNMENT.**

**GOD IS CALLING EVERYONE WHO IS PART OF THIS MINISTRY—THE ROCK, SOLID LIVES, AND ALL WHO FOLLOW WITH US—TO BEGIN FOCUSING ON, AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR, TWO THINGS:**

1. **PLAYING YOUR PART IN JESUS’ CHURCH**
2. **PLAYING YOUR PART IN MAKING DISCIPLES**

**RIGHT NOW, JESUS IS CALLING US TO WORK ON THE FIRST ONE. HE HAS CALLED US TO GET INTO GROUPS AND TO GO THROUGH THE SEVEN-WEEK STUDY CALLED JESUS’ CHURCH.**

**WE JUST BEGAN THE FIRST LESSON OF THE JESUS’ CHURCH GROUP STUDY THIS WEEK, AND SOME OF YOU HAVE NOT YET STARTED. YOU MAY NOT REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT YOUR PARTICIPATION IS, BUT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT. GOD IS CALLING AND HELPING PEOPLE TO POSSESS THEIR PROMISED LAND.**

**IF YOU WILL PARTICIPATE, IT WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE.**

**AND WE NEED TO STICK WITH IT AND GET THROUGH ALL SEVEN LESSONS.**

**THOUGH ALL OF US ARE AFFECTED, THIS IS REALLY BETWEEN EACH OF US AND JESUS**

**SONG: I WILL MAKE ROOM FOR YOU**