

January 26, 2020

## GOD EXPECTS

### NUMBERS 32:20-32

#### INTRODUCTION

No one is perfect. That is a truth that is used by some as an excuse to behave in ungodly ways. It is true that we are not perfect but we are called to be people who imitate our Lord (Ephesians 5:1) and, therefore, reflect His character and ways. As God is THE promise keeper those who follow Him must reflect the same by seeking to live righteously in every aspect of our lives. When we confess our loyalty to Christ and our commitment to follow in His ways the Lord expects that we should model His integrity in doing and being as we professed. The expectation of God is to be our greatest duty of delight.

#### WARNING ISSUED (Numbers 32:20-24)

The Gadites and the Reubenites desired to settle in a specific part of the land east of the Jordan. Moses, initially, was alarmed, but in the end imposed on them requirements that called them to a wholehearted commitment. They were to be armed and always ready to fight and, when called to fight, to not cease until victory was won. In other words, they had to give full allegiance and commitment to the cause of God without reservation. A second aspect of this agreement was that, if the Gadites and Reubenites agreed, they would have to live and do all things as *before the Lord* (Numbers 32:20,21,22). This phrase, repeated three times, was to remind them that their commitment was not, first, to Israel, but to the Lord. This sobering thought was highlighted in these words: *“But if you don’t do this, you will certainly sin against the Lord; be sure your sin will catch up with you”* (Numbers 32:23). *“Before the Lord”* also reminded them that this was God’s work and that they should commit the entire work to Him for success. A final reason for the repetition of the phrase was to encourage them to never lose sight that the Lord, Himself, is in control. From this passage we can see that the Lord, who never changes, expects the same allegiance and faithfulness from the church today. There is no room for claiming the Lord and yet being committed to ourselves. Faithfulness to the end is the calling of everyone who names the name of Christ. We are to live the whole of our lives and yield to entirety of our hearts as *coram deo* – In the presence of God.

#### AGREEMENT GIVEN (Numbers 32:25-27)

The Gadites and the Reubenites submit to the requirements laid out by Moses in full submission to his leadership, recognizing themselves as his servants (Numbers 32:25, 27). As servants they reflected the true nature of servanthood, being willing to surrender all for the sake of the mission of God, saying *“Our dependents, wives, livestock, and all our animals will remain here in the cities of Gilead”* (Numbers 32:26). This did not mean that they were simply leaving people and animals behind but it was a statement of their trust that the Lord would preserve and protect all as they completed His mission. Sometimes we are so attached to people and things such that we are hindered in fulfilling our calling from the Lord. We must reflect the same hope, trust and faith and these groups did and trust in the Lord’s protective provision and see Him as our greatest priority (Luke 14:26). The Gadites and Reubenites were also ready to leave all to the Lord’s care because they were *“equipped for war before the Lord and will go across to battle as my lord orders”* (Numbers 32:27). As Christians, we are equipped for the battle – the good fight – the Lord has for us. The Holy Spirit resides within us, equipping us moment by moment with every gift and grace needed to finish the race set before us. What remains is this: are we willing to trust the Lord with all things, including our own lives, knowing that He who has equipped us will never leave nor forsake us?

**ACCOUNTABILITY ESTABLISHED (Number 32:28-32)**

What is lacking in churches today is real and authentic accountability. Pastors are believed, without question, merely because of their position. Others are believed simply because they make certain claims. The Bible, however, proves that all must be held accountable for their lives and commitments to the Lord. Although the Gadites and Reubenites verbally agreed with the requirements given by Moses and, even though they called themselves his servants, Moses nonetheless laid out actions of accountability. Moses said that if the Gadites and Reubenites fulfilled their obligations by crossing over, being always ready to battle and battling to the end *“you are to give them the land of Gilead as a possession”* (Numbers 32:29). If they did not fulfill their obligations *“they must accept land in Canaan with you”* (Numbers 32:30). These words of Moses were said in the presence of Eleazar, Joshua and the family heads of Israel (Numbers 32:28) so that it was unmistakably clear what the expectations and consequences were. Accountability is crucial, not simply to hold others to lives of integrity, but to ensure, as humanly as possible, that the name of the Lord is not defamed by outright hypocrisy, especially within leadership. May the Lord revive the spiritual discipline of accountability within the church, for His glory.