



Nebo
A City
A Mountain Range
An Ancestor
An Idol

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Chapter 1

A City allotted to the tribe of Reuben

Numbers 32:3

Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon.

The Tribes of Reuben and Gad Request an Inheritance on the East of Jordan

Here is a proposal made by the Reubenites and Gadites that the land lately conquered might be allotted to them. Two things common in the world might lead these tribes to make this choice; the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

There was much amiss in the principle they went upon; they consulted their own private convenience more than the public good.

Thus to the present time, many seek their own things more than the things of Jesus Christ; and are led by worldly interests and advantages to take up short of the heavenly Canaan.

Moses Reproves the Reubenites and Gadites

The proposal showed disregard to the land of Canaan, distrust of the Lord's promise, and unwillingness to encounter the difficulties and dangers of conquering and driving out the inhabitants of that land.

Moses is wroth with them. It will become any of God's Israel to sit down unconcerned about the difficult and perilous concerns of their brethren, whether public or personal.

He reminds them of the fatal consequences of the unbelief and faint-heartedness of their fathers, when they were, as themselves, just ready to enter Canaan.

If men considered as they ought what would be the end of sin, they would be afraid of the beginning of it.

Numbers 32:38

And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

They Take Possession of the Land to the East of Jordan

Concerning the settlement of these tribes, observe, that they built the cities, that is, repaired them. They changed the names of them; probably they were idolatrous, therefore they should be forgotten.

A spirit of selfishness, of seeking our own, not the things of Christ, when each one ought to assist others, is as dangerous as it is common.

It is impossible to be sincere in the faith, sensible of the goodness of God, constrained by the love of Christ, sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost, and yet be indifferent to the progress of religion, and the spiritual success of others, through love of ease, or fear of conflict.

Let then your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1 Chron. 5:8

And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baal-meon:

This chapter gives some account of the two tribes and a half seated on the east side of Jordan. They were made captives by the king of Assyria, because they had forsaken the Lord.

Only two things are here recorded concerning these tribes. 1. They all shared in a victory. Happy is that people who live in harmony together, who assist each other against the common enemies of their souls, trusting in the Lord, and calling upon him. 2. They shared in captivity.

They would have the best land, not considering that it lay most exposed. The desire of earthly objects draws to a distance from God's ordinances, and prepares men for destruction.

Chapter 2

Prophecies concerning Nebo

Isaiah 15:2

He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off.

This prophecy coming to pass within three years, would confirm the prophet's mission, and the belief in all his other prophecies. Concerning Moab it is foretold,

1. That their chief cities should be surprised by the enemy.
2. Great changes, and very dismal ones, may be made in a very little time.
3. The Moabites would have recourse to their idols for relief. Ungodly men, when in trouble, have no comforter. But they are seldom brought by their terrors to approach our forgiving God with true sorrow and believing prayer.
4. There should be the cries of grief through the land. It is poor relief to have many fellow-sufferers, fellow-mourners.
5. The courage of their soldiers should fail. God can easily deprive a nation of that on which it most depended for strength and defence.
6. These calamities should cause grief in the neighboring parts. Though enemies to Israel, yet as our fellow-creatures, it should be grievous to see them in such distress.

Woe unto Nebo for it is spoiled.

Jeremiah 48:1

Against Moab thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.

Prophecies against Moab for Pride and Security

The Chaldeans are to destroy the Moabites. We should be thankful that we are required to seek the salvation of men's lives, and the salvation of their souls, not to shed their blood; but we shall be the more without excuse if we do this pleasant work deceitfully.

The cities shall be laid in ruins, and the country shall be wasted. There will be great sorrow. There will be great hurry. If any could give wings to sinners, still they could not fly out of the reach of Divine indignation.

There are many who persist in unrepented iniquity, yet long enjoy outward prosperity.

They had been long corrupt and unreformed, secure and sensual in prosperity. They have no changes of their peace and prosperity, therefore their hearts and lives are unchanged, [Ps 55:19](#).

For Carnal Confidence and Contempt of God

Jeremiah 48:22

And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim.

The destruction of Moab is further prophesied, to awaken them by national repentance and reformation to prevent the trouble, or by a personal repentance and reformation to prepare for it.

In reading this long roll of threatenings, and mediating on the terror, it will be of more use to us to keep in view the power of God's anger and the terror of his judgments, and to have our hearts possessed with a holy awe of God and of his wrath, than to search into all the figures and expressions here used.

Yet it is not perpetual destruction. The chapter ends with a promise of their return out of captivity in the latter days. Even with Moabites God will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth.

The Jews refer it to the days of the Messiah; then the captives of the Gentiles, under the yoke of sin and Satan, shall be brought back by Divine grace, which shall make them free indeed.

Chapter 3

A mountain range east of Jordan

Deut. 32:49-50

Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:

And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

Moses to Go Up Mount Nebo to Die

Now Moses had done his work, why should he desire to live a day longer?

God reminds him of the sin of which he had been guilty, for which he was kept from entering Canaan.

It is good for the best of men to die repenting the infirmities of which they are conscious.

But those may die with comfort and ease, whenever God calls for them, notwithstanding the sins they remember against themselves, who have a believing prospect, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life beyond death.

Moses dies on Mount Nebo Range.

Deut. 34:1

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

Moses Views the Promised Land from Mount Nebo

Moses seemed unwilling to leave his work; but that being finished, he manifested no unwillingness to die.

God had declared that he should not enter Canaan. But the Lord also promised that Moses should have a view of it, and showed him all that good land.

Such a sight believers now have, through grace, of the bliss and glory of their future state.

Sometimes God reserves the brightest discoveries of his grace to his people to support their dying moments. Those may leave this world with cheerfulness, who die in the faith of Christ, and in the hope of heaven.

Chapter 4

A city in the territory of the tribe of Judah

Ezra 2:29

The children of Nebo, fifty and two.

The Numbers That Returned

An account was kept of the families that came up out of captivity. See how sin lowers a nation, which righteousness would exalt!

Those who undervalue their relation to the Lord in times of reproach, persecution, or distress, will have no benefit from it when it becomes honourable or profitable. Those who have no evidence that they are, by the new birth, spiritual priests unto God, through Jesus Christ, have no right to the comforts and privileges of Christians.

Neh. 7:33

The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two.

Nehemiah knew that the safety of a city, under God, depends more upon the inhabitants than upon its walls. Every good gift and every good work are from above.

God gives knowledge, he gives grace; all is of him, and therefore all must be to him. What is done by human prudence, must be ascribed to the direction of Divine Providence.

But woe to those who turn back from the Lord, loving this present world! And happy those who dedicate themselves, and their substance, to his service and glory!

Chapter 5

A Babylonian idol

Isaiah 46:1

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

The Idols Could Not Save Themselves, but God Saves His People.

The heathen insulted the Jews, as if their idols Bel and Nebo were too hard for Jehovah.

But their worshippers cannot help them; both the idols and the idolaters are gone into captivity.

Let not God's people be afraid of either. Those things from which ungodly men expect safety and happiness, will be found unable to save them from death and hell.

The true God will never fail his worshippers. The history of the life of every believer is a kind of abstract of the history of Israel.

Our spiritual life is upheld by his grace, as constantly as our natural life by his providence. And God will never leave them.

The Author will be the Finisher of their well-being, when, by decays, they need help as much as in infancy.

This promise to Israel, enfeebled and grown old as a nation, is applicable to every aged follower of Christ. When compassed about with infirmities, and perhaps those around begin to grow weary of you, yet I am He that I have promised to be, He that you would have me to be.

I will bear you up; carry you on in your way, and carry you home at last. If we learn to trust in and love him, we need not be anxious about our remaining days or years; he will still provide for us and watch over us, both as the creatures of his power, and as new-created by his Spirit.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary

