

Exegetical Notes, Deuteronomy 2:24-3:11

“When the Answer Is Yes”

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(Moses’ historical narrative begun in Deuteronomy 1:3 continues.)

Deuteronomy 2:24-3:11

Verses 2:24-25

“Set out now and cross the Arnon Gorge. See, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his country. Begin to take possession of it and engage him in battle. ²⁵ This very day I will begin to put the terror and fear of you on all the nations under heaven. They will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you.”

- After being told to wait for 38 years (see 2:14), God told the next generation of Israelites that it was time to claim the land. They were to cross the Arnon River and to claim the land of the Amorite king, Sihon, who controlled the city of Hesbon.
- God decreed that HE had given this territory to Israel and that by taking this land other nations would hear of them and become fearful of them.

Verses 2:26-31

From the Desert of Kedemoth I sent messengers to Sihon king of Heshbon offering peace and saying, ²⁷ “Let us pass through your country. We will stay on the main road; we will not turn aside to the right or to the left. ²⁸ Sell us food to eat and water to drink for their price in silver. Only let us pass through on foot—²⁹ as the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did for us—until we cross the Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us.”³⁰ But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

³¹ The LORD said to me, “See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his country over to you. Now begin to conquer and possess his land.”

- Moses first asked Sihon to allow the Hebrews to pass peacefully through his territory. He offered to buy the provisions the Israelites would need from Sihon.
- Moses said that this is what Seir and Ar had done (see 2:1-23. Seir and Ar had not allowed the Israelites to pass through the center of those territories. They had opposed that with military force. However, they had allowed Moses to circle around their territories without opposition and sold him the provisions the people needed).
- Sihon refused to cooperate with Israel. He would not let them pass through his territory nor would he sell them the provisions they needed.
- Moses indicates that this was part of God’s plan for Israel.

Verses 2:32-37

³² When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, ³³ the LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. ³⁴ At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed them—men, women and children. We left no survivors. ³⁵ But the livestock and the plunder from the towns we had captured we carried off for ourselves. ³⁶ From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the gorge, even as far as Gilead, not one town was too strong for us. The LORD our God gave us all of them. ³⁷ But in accordance with the command of the LORD our God, you did not encroach on any of the land of the Ammonites, neither the land along the course of the Jabbok nor that around the towns in the hills.

- Israel successfully defeated Sihon in battle and laid claim to all of his territory.
- The text says that Israel “destroyed” Sihon’s towns, including the people who occupied them. The Hebrew word translated destroyed is sometimes translated “devoted.” It means that through death these people were put into the hands of God. It was an attempt to put the ultimate fate of those people under God.
- Israel did not attack lands which were not controlled by Sihon. This was because other Amorite territories, not under Sihon’s control, were not included in the order of God, because God’s command was very specific. It only mentioned Sihon. The new generation was not taking any chances but was being obedient to the specific commands of God.

Verses 3:1-2

Next we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan with his whole army marched out to meet us in battle at Edrei. ² The LORD said to me, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon.”

- After defeating Sihon, Israel moved northward to Bashan where Og was king. Og marched out to oppose Israel and they met in battle at Edrei.
- God revealed to Moses that Og would be defeated in battle just as had Sihon.

Verses 3:3-7

So the LORD our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors. ⁴ At that time we took all his cities. There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take from them—the whole region of Argob, Og’s kingdom in Bashan. ⁵ All these cities were fortified with high walls and with gates and bars, and there were also a great many unwalled villages. ⁶ We completely destroyed them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying every city—men, women and children. ⁷ But all the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves.

- The region of Argob was the portion of Bashan controlled by Og. It had sixty walled/fortified cities in it, all of which Israel claimed as God’s gift by Og’s defeat.

Verses 3:8-11

⁸ So at that time we took from these two kings of the Amorites the territory east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge as far as Mount Hermon. ⁹ (Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians; the Amorites call it Senir.) ¹⁰ We took all the towns on the plateau, and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salekah and Edrei, towns of Og’s kingdom in Bashan. ¹¹ (Og king of Bashan was the last of the Rephaites. His bed was decorated with iron and was more than nine cubits long and four cubits wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

- Israel claimed the Transjordan, the area east of the Jordan River, which God gave them. But in defeating Sihon and Og, Israel laid claim to all of that area.
- Og was apparently, one of the “giants,” the Rephaites that lived in the land. His bed was made of iron to strengthen the frame because of his weight

and was “nine cubits,” about 13.5 feet long, because of his great height. This proves that even the giants who so frightened the spies were subject to power of God.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *When The Answer is Yes*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)