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Deuteronomy 1 - 3



Deuteronomy - Steve Gregg

This commentary by Steve Gregg delves into the first few chapters of Deuteronomy, describing the Israelites' journey and their conquests of various lands. Gregg provides insight into the story of the twelve spies and the Israelites' fear of the Amorites, as well as the concept of the age of accountability. He also explores God's instructions to Moses, the sparing of certain conquered cities, and the benefits Moses received from his leadership.

Transcript

So let's turn to the first chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. The first four chapters, most of the four chapters, are occupied with the first discourse in the book of Moses, which is largely a historical review, with lessons added, warnings primarily, that, you know, from what they've seen in God's dealings with them in the past, they know that God will judge them if they disobey. But they also have seen that he gives them victories when they're obedient, and so these are the lessons he wants to convey to them.

Beginning chapter 1, verse 1, these are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan, in the wilderness, in the plain opposite, Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazorot, and Dizahab. In the Septuagint, Suph is translated as the Red Sea, but actually it's not considered to be a reference to the Red Sea by most modern scholars. So Suph, Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazorot, and Dizahab are place names that I don't know to what degree they are able to be identified today, but I would not wish to be wasting too much time figuring out where they are anyway.

We know where Israel was, they were on the plains of Moab, across from Jericho, and that's what we need to know. Verse 2, it is 11 days journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. Now, Kadesh Barnea is right across the river from Canaan, and Horeb is Mount Sinai where they received the law, so presumably they could have gotten from Mount Sinai into the Promised Land in less than two weeks, but it took much longer.

Now, it came to pass in the 40th year, which underscores how much longer it took, in the 11th month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel

according to all that the Lord had given him as commandment to them. After he had killed Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ashteroth, in Edreai. On this side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, and then we have his sermon.

Now, what's interesting is it repeatedly says, on this side of Jordan, and that means that the writer was on the east side of the Jordan, which would not be the case if it was written in Israel at a later date. Moses, who is the purported writer of this, lived and died on the east side of the Jordan where these events took place, and therefore it is written as if he is the actual author talking about what side of the Jordan he was on from his perspective. A later generation of Jews writing this in Israel would have said on the other side of the Jordan, east side, because they would be on the west side in the Promised Land.

So these references to these events being on this side of the Jordan simply are confirmations that it was written before Israel took the land, which is contrary to what many modern scholars would like to think. The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying, You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. Turn and take your journey and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowlands.

In the south and on the sea coast to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the review, Freddie's. See, I have set the land before you go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give to them and their descendants after them. So he gives the dimensions of the land similar to the way it was given to Abraham, including the review, Freddie's, although the review, Freddie's.

Is not really a border of the most of the Promised Land that usually delineated in the book of Genesis, for example, I mean, you've read his mention there, but many times we find that the Promised Land is sees the Jordan as the eastern border. So it's a little difficult to know exactly how the Euphrates played into it as a border. We do know that there were times when Israel did control the land to the Euphrates River.

For example, David did. David had some cities near the Euphrates that he had lost and he went back to recover. And Solomon in first Kings chapter four specifically said to have ruled over all the land, even over to the Euphrates as a boundary.

But it was never really part of Israel is more really part of Israel's dominions. They conquered the region and and were had vassals in those areas. Now, Moses says in verse nine, and I spoke to you at that time saying, I alone am not able to bear you.

The Lord, your God, has multiplied you. And here you are today as the stars of heaven in multitude. May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous

than you are and bless you as he has promised you.

How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? Choose wise understanding and knowledgeable men from among your tribes and I will make them heads over you. And you answered me and said, the thing which you have told us is good. So I told the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men and made them heads over.

I took the heads of your tribe, excuse me, wise and knowledgeable men and made them heads over your leaders, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties and leaders of tens and officers for your tribes. Then I commanded your judges at that time saying, hear the cases between your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment.

You shall hear the small as well as the great. You shall not be afraid in any man's presence for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring it to me and I will hear it.

And I commanded you at that time, all things which you should do. Now, this versus 9 through 18 is describing, of course, the story we found in Exodus chapter 18. Moses speaks as if it was his idea to do this, but we know that he got the idea from his father-in-law, Jethro in Exodus chapter 18.

Jethro, his father-in-law, saw that Moses was spending his days at the tent and with long lines of people waiting out in the sun to speak with him and bring their their legal matters to him to to judge for them. And it was Jethro who said, you're going to wear yourself out and the people this way. So you need to appoint leaders of thousands and hundreds and so forth.

And so Moses did what he said. Now, here there's no mention of Jethro, but there's no contradiction. Obviously, after the idea appealed to Moses.

Moses went to the people and suggested it to them. And that's what that's the point where the stories pick up here. Perhaps the only thing important to mention about this here is that this places that delegation of authority at the location of Mount Horeb.

Because in verses six through eight, we see God telling Moses, it's time to leave Mount Sinai. That would have been about a year after they arrived there because they stayed about a year at Mount Sinai. And this sermon begins with God telling Moses and the children will move along.

It's time to leave Sinai. You've been here long enough. And it sounds like he's saying at that time in verse nine.

I spoke to you at that time saying now what I'm suggesting here is that Moses is saying

here that the time where he divided the people up according to Jethro's instructions was after they'd been at Mount Horeb at Mount Sinai for a while. Now, when we read Exodus 18, we saw that that story was positioned earlier than their arrival at Sinai. In fact, the Jethro's visit in chapter 18 is one chapter earlier than their arrival at Sinai and two chapters earlier than the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Now, when we were in Exodus, I mentioned it's rather strange that in chapter 18, Moses told Jethro that the people come and bring their cases to Moses and he judges them from the laws and the statutes of God, which so far as the narrative had told us up to that point, God had not given any laws and statutes until he gave the Ten Commandments and the rest. But Jethro's visit is recorded in Exodus two chapters before God gives any law. And yet we find in that chapter Moses is judging cases according to that law.

I suggested at that time when we were in Exodus that perhaps chapter 18 recorded out of chronological order. And that perhaps it really belongs to a time while they were at Sinai. This chronology in Deuteronomy chapter one would seem to confirm that because we've got them at Mount Sinai in verses six through eight.

And it's at that time that Moses said this story that comes from Exodus 18 occurred. And so he selected judges among them and told them to judge impartially, not to be intimidated by anyone like a rich man or a powerful man who's got a case and that he wants the judge to judge it his way. He says, don't be afraid of anyone in any man's presence.

And if the case is too hard for you, bring it to me. And so that's how they set their court system up. Apparently, at Mount Sinai, verse 19.

So we departed from Horeb and went through all the great and terrible wilderness, which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites. As the Lord, our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea.

And I said to you, you have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord, our God is giving us. Look, the Lord, your God has set the land before you go up and possess it. As the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you, do not fear or be discouraged.

And every one of you came near me and said, let us send men before us and let them search out the land for us and bring back word to us of the way in which we should go up and of the cities into which we should come. And the plan pleased me well. So I took 12 of your men, one man from each tribe, and they departed and went up into the mountain and came out to the valley of Eshgal and spied it out.

They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us. And they brought back word to us saying it is a good land which the Lord, our God is giving us. Now, we know this story, of course, we've encountered it in numbers and it's

primarily from numbers 13 that the information is given about the spies going in.

But in numbers 13, it actually told it as if it was God's idea to send the spies. It says the Lord spoke to Moses and said, take 12 men and send them in to spy out the land. Here we read that the idea was that of the people.

Again, that's not a contradiction. It's just that Exodus picks up at a later point in the story. This gives us some earlier information.

The people felt more comfortable before going into the land to have some spies go in and reconnoiter and to decide what the best route would take and what cities they should go to first and things like that. And Moses thought it sounded good. But Moses apparently consulted the Lord.

And then, as it relates in numbers 13, God said, yeah, send spies into the land. So God did send them, though it was they that wanted it. He gave them their request and he says they brought back a good report initially.

But verse 26, nevertheless, you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord, your God. And you murmured in your tents and said, because the Lord hates us, he has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. When Moses here relates the spies report in verse 25, he only relates the good thing.

They said that it's a good land. Which the Lord has given us. He does not relate that they mentioned giants and walled cities up to the heavens and things like that.

I guess at this point, he's not wanting to put those images in the head of these people and discourage them, too. He only reminded them that the spies said it was good land. It's the land we're having.

But of course, in verse 26 and 27, when he mentions that they wouldn't go up and they were afraid of the Amorites, that I mean, he implies without mentioning it, that the spies had brought back word about the imposing opposition they would experience there from the giant. Verse 28, they said, where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying the people are greater and taller than we. Now, now he gives that information.

The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. Moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. The Anakim, of course, are giant.

Then I said to you, do not be terrified or afraid of them. The Lord, your God, who goes before you, he will fight for you according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes. And in the wilderness where you saw how Yahweh, your God, carried you as a man carries his son in all the way that you went until you came to this place.

Yet for all that you did not believe the Lord, your God, who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tent to show you the way you should go in the fire by night and in the cloud by day. So even though God had shown you his presence and had guided you and protected you and brought you along like a man might carry his own son, protecting him from the dangers and so forth. You did not believe that God would give you the victory over the Anakim and the and the giants in the land.

Now, Moses gives it as if he's the main one encouraging them to go into the land here. In numbers, we have we're told that Joshua and Caleb strongly encouraged the people along the same line. No doubt, Moses did as well.

Moses and them were probably all pleading with the people, but in numbers, we read about Joshua and Caleb speaking up for the land. And here, Moses just reminds us of his having said these things. Verse 34 and Yahweh heard the sound of your words and was angry and took an oath saying, surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land of which I swore to give to your father.

Except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it and to him and his children. I'm giving the land on which he walked because he wholly followed the Lord. And of course, we do know that Joshua also is an exception.

Sometimes Caleb alone is mentioned. I'm not sure why. Sometimes Caleb and Joshua are mentioned together.

Other times, just Caleb is mentioned. It's not always clear why the Lord was also angry with me for your sake. Now, this is much later.

And this is much later at the second waters of Meribah, where Moses struck the rock with two times. So he skips kind of over from Kadesh Barnea at the revolt, which was two years into the exodus. And he skips now to the 40th year when he made the Lord angry with what he did.

Or the Lord is angry with me, but he says it parenthetically here for your sake, saying even you shall not go in there. But Joshua, the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

Moreover, your little ones and your children who you say will be victims who today have no knowledge of good and evil. They shall go in there to them. I will give it and they shall possess it.

But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea. So he's at Kadesh Barnea for the whole the whole narrative here, except he has a parenthetical reference in verse 37. The Lord is angry with me also for your sake.

But that wasn't until later. He just mentions that even he made God angry at one point

by his disobedience, but not at that time that he's talking about here. Now, in reference to those who were 20 years old and younger, or we should say 19 years old and younger at that time, they are referred to in verse 39 as having no knowledge of good and evil.

And based on that, some people have suggested that the so-called age of accountability might be at about age 20. That seems pretty old. The whole idea of an age of accountability is the concept is that babies, when they're born, don't know anything.

They don't know any good or evil, and therefore they're hardly responsible. They may behave selfishly and foolishly, but they don't know they're doing it. And therefore, they're hardly accountable before God and God would not punish them for it.

And on this view, when a baby dies, that baby is saved. Its own ignorance makes it not fall within the category of those who are condemned for their sins. Although it has sinned, it's not accountable for its sins because it didn't know better.

But obviously, if this is true, and I believe it is, then there comes some age in a child's life where he does reach the point of being accountable for his behavior. Where he does get punished if he dies beyond that point and has not repented of his sins. And that point, that transition point, is usually called the age of accountability.

And no one knows what that age might be. That there is such an age is referred to in Isaiah chapter 7. Some people say the age of accountability is never mentioned in the Bible. And not everybody believes in such, but there is a mention of it.

In chapter 7 of Isaiah. And it's not really, it doesn't use the term age of accountability, but it certainly talks about it. Because it talks about a child being born.

In Isaiah 7, 16, it says, for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good. The land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. So, he's talking about the birth of a baby.

And he's talking about a political development that will occur within a few years after the birth of that baby. And to illustrate how soon that will be, it says, before that child will know to choose the good and to refuse the evil. Now, it makes it very clear that there's a point in a child's life where they don't know to do that.

But then they reach a point where they do know to do that. They do know what they're doing, they do have moral responsibility. Now, it would sound really like Isaiah is referring to a child's very early age.

Because in a parallel prophecy in Isaiah 8, about the same child, it says, before the child shall know to say mama and papa. These two kings will be gone, the ones who are threatening Judah. And so, it sounds like the age of accountability for the child is quite young.

And no one really knows when it would be. It seems like in later Jewish tradition, age 13, 12 or 13, was considered to be an age of accountability. And that's pretty much what a bar mitzvah celebrates.

A child at about age 13, celebrating his passage from childhood to manhood. From being under his parents' moral authority to being under his own obligation to keep the laws of God as a man himself. And so, 13 seems to be like a traditional age of accountability in the Jewish religion.

However, in this passage, it says that those who did not die in the wilderness were those who had no knowledge of good or evil at the time. But that included everyone under 20 years old. So, some think maybe 20 years old is the age of accountability.

But that's, by almost all estimates, that's a little late to place it. Certainly, someone under 20 would know right from wrong before then and would be responsible for their knowledge of it. So, it may be that this mention about your little ones, verse 39, who have no knowledge of good and evil may not refer to everybody under 20.

True, everybody under 20 was spared. But there's a focus in this comment on the little ones you're afraid. You're afraid your little ones would perish.

Well, your little ones who don't know good and evil, they're not going to perish. But that doesn't mean that they're the only ones who are not going to perish. Perhaps the older ones are simply not in view here.

The ones that are almost 20 years old. Now, verse 41, you answered and said to me, we have sinned against Yahweh. We will go up and fight just as Yahweh, our God, commanded us.

And when every one of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain. And Yahweh said to me, tell them, do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you, lest you be defeated before your enemies. So I spoke to you, yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of Yahweh and presumptuously went up into the mountain.

And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do. And drove you back from Seir to Hormat. Then you returned and wept before Yahweh, but Yahweh would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

So you remained in Kadesh many days according to the days that you spent there. Now, they were soundly defeated by the Amorites. We don't know how many casualties they sustained, but they were chased up like people running from a swarm of bees.

And that's what he said. And they were simply powerless to conquer the Amorites. Now, the Amorites are also the people that they later did conquer.

38 years later, Sihon and Og were kings of those Amorite peoples. And yet the difference was that it was a new generation that conquered the Amorites 38 years later. And also that these who failed to do so in the first generation did so after God had already told them that they were not going to take the land.

And they were going to have to wander around and die in the wilderness. They didn't like God's judgment and so they on their own decided to change the situation. And God showed them that they couldn't do it on their own.

The fact that they suffered that defeat at this point makes it very clear that when they later would win their battles, it was the Lord, not them. If they had always won every battle they were in, they might just congratulate themselves that they're a great army and a great powerful nation. But the fact that they were so humiliatingly defeated in their first attempt against the Amorites shows that they don't have what it takes to beat the Amorites.

But when God was with them later on, they beat them handily. And so, you know, this defeat shows the difference between what they can do on their own and what God can do for them. Chapter 2. Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the way of the Red Sea as the Lord spoke to me and we skirted the Mount Seir for many days.

Now, those many days are 38 years. Verse 14 mentions it being 38 years. Chapter 2, verse 14.

But he skips over those 38 years and just says, we skirted Mount Seir, the region of the Edomites. We just kind of went around it for 38 years, pretty much. And the Lord spoke to me saying at the end of that time, at the end of 38 years, you have skirted this mountain long enough.

Now, that's similar to the words in Chapter 1, verse 6, where he at Mount Sephora because you've dwelt long enough at this mountain. That was Mount Sinai. This time, it's not Seir where they've been 38 years skirting the mountain.

And God said, that's long enough. You skirted this mountain long enough. Turn northward and command the people saying you are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir.

And they will be afraid of you. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully. Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land.

No, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. So even though Esau was not the chosen seed of Isaac and Jacob was, Esau was not left without anything. God himself said he gave Mount Seir to Esau, just like he gave Canaan to Israel.

And it's interesting, too, because people often say that Israel has a right to the land of Israel because God gave it to them. Well, he also gave Mount Seir to Edom, but Edom is extinct now. Just because God gives it, doesn't mean that people never lose it because of disobedience.

It's interesting that God says that he had given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. Same thing he says that he does about Canaan to Israel. Later, he's going to say the same thing about the Moabites and the land he's given them to the descendants of Lot as a possession, in verse 9. So these different branches of the family of Abraham, really, or of Terah, more properly, have their ancestral lands given to them by God, just like Israel does.

Although Israel is the only one of these nations that's still around. The others are extinct. Even the ethnic group is gone, as far as we know, to the last man.

So, you shall buy food from them, verse 6, with money that you may eat, and you shall also buy water from them with money that you may drink. Now, we know that Israel made a request of Esau's land, of Edom, that they could pass through and that they could buy or pay for anything they would eat or drink. But they actually said, we'd go through and we won't eat or drink your stuff, but if our cattle or anything, drink any of your own, we'll pay for it.

And Edom refused to let them. However, a little later on, it looks like they did manage to buy some stuff from some of the Edomites. Because in verse 29, actually, verses 28 and 29 of this chapter, they made this offer to Sihon as they made it to Edom.

And in verse 28, it says, you shall sell me food for money that I may eat and give me water for money that I may drink. Only let me pass through on foot, just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Assyria and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me. Now, as we read in the book of Numbers, Esau and Moab did not let Israel pass through their land.

And we don't read of them agreeing to sell food and water to them. So verse 28 sounds like it conflicts with what we read in Numbers. But I think most scholars explain this by saying, well, they weren't allowed to pass through Edom proper, but they skirted it.

And no doubt, Edomite individuals, farmers and so forth, did sell them some food and water and so forth as they went by their land. But they were not allowed to go through on the king's highway as they asked to. But there is some difficulty in knowing exactly how chapter 2, verse 29 is to be harmonized with this.

And it says in verse 7, for the Lord, your God, has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows you're trudging through this great wilderness. These 40 years, the Lord, your God, has been with you.

You have lacked nothing. And when we pass beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau, who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from the from Elath and Ezean-Geber, we turn and pass by way of the wilderness of Moab. Then the Lord said to me, do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given our to the descendants of Lot as a possession.

Then we have this parenthetical information, which either Moses is saying as a parenthesis, or else the later writer added this information in. It says the Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. They were also regarded as giants like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim.

The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave them. Now that's all in parentheses, and it's giving us information about the land that the Moabites lived in. The Moabites conquered the land from some people called Emim, and the Edomites conquered their land, Mount Seir, from people called the Horites.

Now what's mentioned is the Emim in particular are said to have been just as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim in verse 10. The reason that's important is because if this was uttered by Moses to the people, he's kind of shaming them because their fathers would not go in to take the land of Canaan because there were Anakim there. There were big people there, and it'd be to their shame that the Moabites, who didn't even have Yahweh with them, were able to go in and take the land that they took from the Emim, who were just as tall as the Anakim.

They faced the same kind of opposition that scared off an earlier generation of Israelites, but they nonetheless conquered them, and therefore it would be thought that Israel should have had the same kind of faith. Now we have a bit of a slight ambiguity here at the end of verse 12, because it says that the children of Esau had conquered the Horites. And it says, just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave them.

Now obviously when Moses was given a speech, they had not yet gone into Canaan, and yet he speaks in the past tense. And there's a couple ways this could be understood. As I said, it's a parenthesis, and it may very well be that a later editor just threw in this information for the reader's interest.

Kind of interrupted Moses' speech, because Moses had mentioned that God gave Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession. And some later editor, maybe even Joshua, may have stuck in this parenthesis saying, well, you know, speaking of the Moabites being given this land, they took it from some giants, just like Israel had to take her land from giants. And the Edomites also had taken their land from another people, just like Israel had to take their land from another people.

And so if this is referring at the end of verse 12 to the conquest of Canaan, then the statement must have been made and added by a later editor, which is not impossible. There's nothing irreverent about the suggestion. However, if Moses was speaking these words, he could still say this because the children of Israel had at this time conquered the region east of Jordan from the Amorites.

Now, true, that's not the promised land, but verse 12 doesn't mention about the promised land, just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave them. That could be a reference to having conquered Sion and Og, and that was now the land of their possession. The land east of the Jordan where they were camped at this time is later referred to in those terms.

For example, in verse 31, in verse 31, it says after they conquered Sion, says in verse 31, the Lord said to me, see, I have begun to give you Sion and his land. Give Sion and his land over to begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land. So the land of Sion is said to be given by God for them to possess.

Likewise, in verse 12 of chapter three, it says in this land, which we possessed at that time, meaning the land of Og also and Sion is mentioned. And then in chapter three, verse 18, he says, and I commanded you at that time saying, the Lord, your God has given you this land to possess. Now, this is the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and it's part of the eastern side of Jordan.

But notice, they have conquered this land. It's not the promised land, but it is given to them by God to possess. And it is something that Israel has already conquered.

And that wording in chapter two, verse 12, is just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave them. The only thing it says there is that God gave them the land and they possessed it. And that's true of the region that they were sitting in when Moses was giving these speeches.

So one could argue that this is added by a later editor and it's related to Canaan or not. It could be referring. It could be Moses speaking about the land that they've already taken.

Verse 13, now rise and cross over the valley of the Zareth. So we crossed over the valley of Zareth. And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the valley of Zareth was 38 years.

Until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as Yahweh had sworn to them. For indeed, the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed. This is the previous generation that came out of Egypt.

So it was when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people that

Yahweh spoke to me saying this day, you are to cross over at are the boundary of Moab. And when you come near to the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them. Remember the Ammonites as well as the Moabites.

They were both descended from Lot through his two daughters. And so these were brother nations of Israel. Do not harass them or meddle with them for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.

Now we have another parenthesis. That was also regarded as a land of giants. Giants formerly dwelt there, but the Ammonites call them Zamzanim, a people of great and as numerous and tall as the Anakim.

So just like the Emim were as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim, and yet the Ammonites defeated them. I'm sorry, the Emim were defeated by the Moabites. So the Zamzanim were also big people like that.

Now both groups are said to be giants. In verse 11 of the Emim, it says they were also regarded as giants. And that verse 20, the Zamzanim were also regarded as a land of giants.

The word giants in these places is not the same word that we find translated giants back in Genesis 6 about the Nephilim. Here is the Rephaim. The Hebrew word is Rephaim translated giants here, and we will find a little bit later that Og is considered to be the last of that race of the Rephaim.

There were still giants afterward, but not of the Rephaim. The Rephaim apparently were some particular ethnic group of giants that included the Zamzanim and the Emim and some of the Amorites like Og. It says in middle of verse 21, but the Lord destroyed them before them and they just possessed them and dwelt in their place.

Now this is interesting because the Ammonites descended from Lot. It says Yahweh destroyed the Zamzanim before the Ammonites. Now we haven't got a book like the Bible given to us by Moabites or Ammonites, but if we did, we would probably have the battles of the Lord conquering the Emim for the Moabites and conquering the Zamzanim for the Ammonites.

It says Yahweh is the one who drove those giants out before them. So just as we will read in Joshua of God driving the Canaanites out before Joshua and Israel, there apparently were similar stories unrecorded or if they were recorded, they were lost of God giving similar victories to the Ammonites and the Moabites and the Edomites. I mean, Israel certainly is a special people because God had a special covenant he made with them at Mount Sinai, but it makes it clear that God is not just a God of Israelites.

You know, God also is taking care of these other nations that were not in the covenant

people. He's involved in the politics of many nations, not just the chosen people nation. Verse 22, just as he had done for the descendants of Esau who dwelt in Seir when he destroyed the Horites from before them, they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place even to this day.

And the Avim who dwelt in the villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtarim, which would be the Philistines, actually an ancient name for the Philistines who came from Caphtar. Caphtar was, I believe Cyprus or Crete, one of those islands in the Mediterranean. Caphtar is Crete and the Philistines came from there, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.

That is the Avim, that's along the Mediterranean coast. The Avim were apparently some earlier ancient people that the Philistines dispossessed. And that's all in parenthesis.

We're being told what some of the earlier anthropological situations were in that region before the present situation that's in Moses day. Verse 24, Arise, take your journey and cross over the river Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sion, the Amorite, king of Heshbon and his land.

And begin to possess it and engage him in battle. This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you. Just noting the hyperbole of every nation under the whole heaven.

This expression is also used in the book of Acts in describing the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 5. It says that there were Jews, pious Jews from under every nation under the whole heaven who were in Jerusalem on that occasion. Just a thing for us to become acquainted with how the Bible uses hyperbole like this. Obviously, not every nation under the heaven would hear about Israel and be terrified.

The Incas, for example, never heard about Israel, nor were they terrified by them. Nor were the, you know, the Zambezi tribe or whatever, you know, these are there were nations under heaven that are not included under this, but it's just the way that the Bible speaks using this kind of hyperbole. Verse 26, and I sent messengers from the wilderness of Ketimoth to Sion, king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through your land.

I will keep strictly to the road. I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. You shall sell me food for money that I may eat and give me water for money that I may drink.

Only let me pass through on foot, just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me until I crossed the Jordan to the land which the Lord our God is giving us. Now, I mentioned is a bit of a problem in verse 29, because both Moab and Edom did not show that kind of welcome to the Israelites to pass through

their land on the king's highway. And so we either have to assume that Moses is saying that there were, you know, people living on the frontiers of Edom and Moab, who, as Israel skirted the territory on the outside, people were willing to do business with them unofficially.

The nations didn't do business with them, but individuals may have sold some things to the Israelites as they went by. Either that or I mean, I don't think this is correct, but I mean, Moses could have been lying after all. He did send words of peace to Zion as if he is peaceful, but God had already told Moses he's going to deliver Zion into his hand and give him his land and so forth.

So, I mean, there was a sense in which there's a little bit of duplicity here on Moses. Perhaps he was just trying to be blameless in the matter and give the guy a chance to be cooperative. But God told Moses before this happened, I'm going to give you Zion in his land.

I'm going to you're going to possess his land. So, I mean, God said you're going to make war with this guy. So it may be that I mean, Moses could have been a little disingenuous here.

I want to make peace with you, but maybe he just want to be honorable, even though he knew this is going to end up in war. But if he was being strategic rather than totally honest, and by the way, a lot of deception does take place in war. He may have been not telling the whole truth and basically saying Edom and Moab let us go through their land when they didn't.

But as a president, therefore, you can trust us to go through your land. It's an awkward statement in view of the numbers accounts, but it's entirely possible for it to be true as it is intended, depending on how it's intended. If he's just saying that individuals help them out, then that's that could be true.

But Sion, the king of Hezbollah, would not let us pass through for the Lord. Your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate that he might deliver him into your hand as it is this day. So just like God hardened Pharaoh's heart to bring about certain purposes for Israel.

So God hardened Sion's spirit in his heart, made him obstinate so that he would fight and lose and that Israel would gain his territory. And the Lord said to me, see, I have begun to give Sion and his land over to you begin to possess it, that you may inherit his land. Then Sion and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz.

And the Lord, our God, delivered him over to us. So we defeated him, his sons and all his people. We took all his cities at that time and we utterly destroyed the men, women and little ones of every city.

We left none remaining. We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves that the sport with the spoil of the cities, which we took from Aurora. Which is on the bank of the River Arnon and from the city that is in the ravine as far as Gilead.

There was not one city too strong for us. The Lord, our God, delivered all to us. Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon or anywhere along the River Jabbok or to the cities of the mountains or wherever the Lord, our God, had forbidden us.

So when we were doing what God told us to, we never found a city too strong to defeat us. But we did not try to conquer the places that God told us not to conquer. So they're taking their instructions a little more directly from God than their parents did.

And they're seeing different results too. Now, they wiped out men, women and children in this city, in every city of Sion's kingdom. And we're going to find in the next chapter, they did just the same thing to Og.

We've read these stories already, of course. The story of the conquest of Hejban and Bashan and their kings is found in the Book of Numbers. But he goes over in chapter three.

Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan. And Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edreai. And the Lord said to me, do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand.

You shall do to him as you did to Sion, the king of Amorites, who dwelt at Hejban. Now, we observed when we talked about this particular story, that no doubt the reason God told Moses, don't be afraid of Og, is that Og was a very imposing fellow. He was the last survivor of the race of the Rephaeum.

After the Amorites had conquered the Emim, and the Ammonites had conquered the Zamzamin, who were counted among the Rephaeum, we are going to be told in verse 11, chapter 3, verse 11, that only Og, the king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the Rephaeum. So, they went extinct with the killing of this man. The Rephaeum were an endangered species, I'm surprised they weren't lost.

I guess they didn't have our American government to protect endangered species like that before. Today, it's considered a tragedy to kill off the last frog of a certain species, or the last snail of a certain species, but to kill off the last giant, man, that'd be something you'd want to protect just for your museums or your zoos or something. You don't want to have a giant.

He's the last one, they killed him off. But he was a real giant. We don't know how big he was.

They didn't measure him, but they measured his bed. Apparently, it was taken into the

museum or something, and they had it in Rabah. According to verse 11, it says his bed was nine cubits in length and four cubits wide.

We observed that previously. Six foot wide bed and 13 and a half feet long. He must have filled some of that, a pretty good portion of that.

The bed was so huge, it must have had to accommodate a man almost that big. Verse 3, so the Lord our God also delivered into our hands Og, the king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. And we took all his cities at that time.

There was not a city which we did not take from him. Sixty cities, all the region of Argab, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates and bars.

So in case you wondered if these guys like Og and Sion were just kind of tribal sheiks that had a ragtag band of tent dwellers following them that were fairly easy to defeat. Og had 60 cities that had all of them had high fortified walls. These were big cities, difficult to conquer.

In fact, one has to wonder how did Israel conquer cities with big, tall walls like that and 60 of them in one battle. I mean, sometimes when walled cities were attacked, you'd have to lay siege to them and wait for the people to be starved out in there, which could take months unless you could somehow break down the wall or scale the wall or break through the gates. And we don't read any of the actual accounts of the battles, but there were some pretty serious conquests here.

Sixty different walled cities fell to Israel. And they all had high walls and gates and bars besides the great many rural towns. And we utterly destroyed them, verse six, as we did to Sion, the king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every the men, women and children of every city.

But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves. And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon. And then we have this parenthetical piece.

The Sidonians call Hermon Sirion and the Amorites call it Sinir. All the cities of the plain, all Gilead, all Bashan, as far as Salka and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og and Bashan. For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the Rephaim, the giants.

Indeed, his bedstead was an iron bedstead. Is it not in Reba of the people of Ammon? Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit. I wonder if archaeologists will ever find that, an iron bed that size.

Interestingly, it was kept in Reba, a city of Ammon. I don't know why the Ammonites had it. They were not.

First of all, Og was not their king, I don't think. And they weren't the ones who conquered him. But perhaps Israel just left the bed behind, not having a use for it.

And then the Ammonites picked it up and thought of it as an interesting souvenir and kept it. So at the time of Moses, it was there. Or maybe not at the time of Moses, because Moses just lived right after the conquest.

So either the bed was taken immediately to Ammon, or else this is a note added later on by someone saying, If you want to know where to find it, it's there. Notice that both of these kings, Og and Sion, are called kings of the Ammonites in verse 8. And you might wonder, why did God spare Moab and Ammon and Edom? But he didn't. He allowed the Ammonites to be wiped out like this.

I mean, after all, the Moabites whom he spared were pretty bad people, too. They're the ones who seduced under the Council of Balaam, seduced the children of Israel at Baal Peor. So why did he spare them? Well, he said it's because they're the children of Lot.

But what's with the Ammonites that he picked on them like that? Well, you can remember something that God said to Abraham back in the 15th chapter of Genesis. In Genesis 15, God was speaking to Abraham. And he said that Abraham's descendants would be 400 years in a land that's not their own.

And he said in verse 16, Genesis 15, 16. But in the fourth generation, they shall return here. For the iniquity of the Ammonites is not yet complete.

That is, God was going to eventually judge and exterminate the Ammonites at the hands of the Israelites. But at the time of Abraham, the iniquity of the Ammonites had not reached its full form. It was not, they were not as their wickedness, the cup of their iniquity had not been full completely.

And so from the time of Abraham to the time of Moses, the Ammonites were filling that cup. And in the time of Moses, the iniquity of the Ammonites was full. And therefore, it was time for God to judge them.

And so Sion and Og were among those of the Ammonites to be taken out early on. Now, back to Deuteronomy 3, quickly here. Verse 12 talks about dividing the land with the Reubenites and the Gadites.

We've, of course, gone over this. We don't have to say much about it. It says, verse 12, In this land, which we possessed at that time from Aror, which is by the river Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites, the rest of Gilead and all Bashan and the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of

Manasseh.

All the regions of Argob with all Bashan was called the land of the giants at one time. That's the rapheim. Jair, the son of Manasseh, took all the regions of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth-Jair.

The man's name was Jair and Havoth-Jair means towns of Jair. To this day. And I gave Gilead to Maker, who was a son of the Manassehites.

And to the Reubenites and the Gadites, I gave from Gilead as far as the river Arnon, the middle of the river as the border, as far as the river Jabbok and the border of the people of Ammon. The plain also, and the Jordan is the border. From Chinareth, as far as the east side of the sea of the Arabah, the salt sea, below the slopes of Pisgah.

Now, most of these place names do not have special interest to us. But Chinareth is the name of a town on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. And earlier in Numbers chapter 34, verse 11, the Sea of Galilee was called the Sea of Chinareth.

Chapter 34 of Numbers, verse 11, it referred to the Sea of Chinareth. That's talking about the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent so much of his time centuries later. At this time, it was called by the name of this town, Chinareth.

And then we see that the salt sea, which we call the Dead Sea, was also called the Sea of the Arabah. It's interesting that these places have so many different names at different times. It's because they were controlled by different countries at different times in their history.

And they usually gave them names according to their winds or according to their languages. Verse 18, And I commanded you at that time, saying, Yahweh, your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel.

But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock, I know that you have much livestock, shall stay in your cities which I have given you until the Lord has given rest to you, brethren, to your brethren as to you. And they shall also possess the land which the Lord your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession, which I have given you.

So that's the charge he gave to the Reubenites, which we'd already read earlier in numbers. And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Your eyes have seen all that Yahweh, your God, has done for these to these two kings. So will Yahweh do to all the kingdoms through which you are to pass.

You must not fear them for the Lord, your God himself fights for you. Now, God, when he

began to give the land of Sihon to Israel in Chapter 2, verse 25, God said, This day I will begin to put the dread and the fear of you upon the nations under the whole of heaven. And so giving Israel victories over Sion and August to put the fear of Israel upon the other nations, especially the Canaanites that were going to be defeated by them.

And also, of course, to encourage Israel and Joshua about the battles they face in the future, because God had shown them tremendous victories. In fact, when they fought against the Midianites in Numbers Chapter 31, they didn't even lose one man. It was only 12,000 Israelites against probably 120,000 Midianites.

And Israel didn't lose a single soldier. Then I pleaded with the Lord at that time, verse 23 says, saying, Oh, Lord God, you have begun to show your servant, your greatness and your mighty hand. For what God is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like your works and your mighty deeds? I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, whose pleasant mountains and those pleasant mountains and Lebanon.

But the Lord was angry with me on your account and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me, enough of that. Speak no more to me of that matter.

Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift your eyes toward the west, the north and the south and the east. Behold it with your eyes and you shall not cross. But you shall not cross over this Jordan, but command Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him.

For he shall go over before this people and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see. So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor. Now, in verse 26, says the Lord is angry with me on your account.

He often speaks that way in the book of Deuteronomy, that God is angry for the sake of Israel. Over in chapter four and verse 21. He says the Lord was angry with me for your sake.

It's because Moses had misrepresented God to Israel, which I guess God felt would misinform them of God's attitudes and confuse them. And therefore, because of the harm done to Israel by Moses action. God was angry at Moses for the sake of the Israelites, which is an amazing thing.

The Israelites have been so rebellious and stubborn and Moses have been obedient and dutiful and suffered for righteousness so much. And yet this one time Moses doesn't obey God and misrepresent him to the people. God takes the side of the people.

And not Moses. Of course, Moses had received many benefits to he got to see God face to face like others did not. But he did not get to go into the land.

Now, he went up on Mount Pisgah, also called Mount Nebo and other passages, and he

got to look. But it's interesting. He says, look in verse 27, West, North, South and East.

I guess East, because he could still see some of the land of the Reubenites and the Gadites to the east of him that they already conquered. But the north and the south and the west would be the region where Canaan would be from where he's standing. And he was able to see it from the mountaintop, but not from inside the land.

Well, the discourse is not over here, but we need to take a break and we'll come back to the fourth chapter. It's very long and it will finish up the first discourse.