DEFEAT OF KING OG OF BASHAN

DISTRIBUTION OF THE TRANSJORDANIAN ALLOTMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRANSJORDANIAN TRIBES

DENIAL TO MOSES OF THE PROMISED LAND

DEUTERONOMY 3:1-29
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Text:

Deuteronomy 3:1-29,

1. Next we set out on the route to Bashan, but King Og of Bashan and his whole army came out to meet us in battle at Edrei.
2. The L ORD, however, said to me, “Don’t be afraid of him because I have already given him, his whole army, and his land to you. You will do to him exactly what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon.”
3. So the L ORD our God did indeed give over to us King Og of Bashan and his whole army and we struck them down until not a single survivor was left.
4. We captured all his cities at that time—there was not a town we did not take from them—sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the dominion of Og in Bashan.
5. All of these cities were fortified by high walls, gates, and locking bars; in addition there were a great many open villages.
6. We put all of these under divine judgment just as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon—every occupied city, including women and children.

7. But all the livestock and plunder from the cities we kept for ourselves.

8. So at that time we took the land of the two Amorite kings in the Transjordan from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon

9. (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion and the Amorites call it Senir),

10. all the cities of the plateau, all of Gilead and Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

11. Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaites. (It is noteworthy that his sarcophagus was made of iron. Does it not, indeed, still remain in Rabbath of the Ammonites? It is thirteen and a half feet long and six feet wide according to standard measure.)

12. This is the land we brought under our control at that time: The territory extending from Aroer by the Wadi Arnon and half the Gilead hill country with its cities I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites.

13. The rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, that is, all Bashan, is called the land of Rephaim.

14. Jair, son of Manasseh, took all the Argob region as far as the border with the Geshurites and Maacathites (namely Bashan) and called it by his name, Havvoth Jair, which it retains to this very day.)

15. I gave Gilead to Machir.

16. To the Reubenites and Gadites I allocated the territory extending from Gilead as far as Wadi Arnon (the
exact middle of the wadi was a boundary) all the way to the Wadi Jabbok, the Ammonite border.
17. The Arabah and the Jordan River were also a border, from the sea of Kinnereth to the sea of the Arabah (that is, the Salt Sea), beneath the watershed of Pisgah to the east.
18. At that time I instructed you as follows: “The LORD your God has given you this land for your possession. You warriors are to cross over before your fellow Israelites equipped for battle.
19. But your wives, children, and livestock (of which I know you have many) may remain in the cities I have given you.
20. You must fight until the LORD gives your countrymen victory as he did you and they take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Then each of you may return to his own territory that I have given you.”
21. I also commanded Joshua at the same time, “You have seen everything the LORD your God did to these two kings; he will do the same to all the kingdoms where you are going.
22. Do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God will personally fight for you.”
23. Moreover, at that time I pleaded with the LORD,
24. “O, Lord GOD, you have begun to show me your greatness and strength. (What god in heaven or earth can rival your works and mighty deeds?)
25. Let me please cross over to see the good land on the other side of the Jordan River—this good hill country and the Lebanon!”
26. But the LORD was angry at me because of you and would not listen to me. Instead, he said to me, “Enough of that! Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.

27. Go up to the top of Pisgah and take a good look to the west, north, south, and east, for you will not be allowed to cross the Jordan.

28. Commission Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, because he will lead these people over and will enable them to inherit the land you will see.”

29. So we settled down in the valley opposite Beth Peor. (NET)

Introduction:

This chapter continues to describe the movement of the twelve tribes into position to enter the promised land and some of the battles that they fought. It is helpful to read the end of the book of Numbers (starting at the end of Numbers chapter 21) and to have a Bible atlas (Please see the map image further down.) as you study this passage.

Commentary:

Deuteronomy 3:1-11, Next we set out on the route to Bashan, but King Og of Bashan and his whole army came out to meet us in battle at Edrei. The LORD, however, said to me, “Don’t be afraid of him because I have already given him, his whole army, and his land to you. You will do to him exactly what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon.” So the LORD our God did indeed give over to us King Og of Bashan and his whole army and we struck them down until not a single survivor
was left. We captured all his cities at that time—there was not a town we did not take from them—sixty cities, all of these were fortified by high walls, gates, and locking bars; in addition there were a great many open villages. We put all of these under divine judgment just as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon—every occupied city, including women and children. But all the livestock and plunder from the cities we kept for ourselves. So at that time we took the land of the two Amorite kings in the Transjordan from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion and the Amorites call it Senir), all the cities of the plateau, all of Gilead and Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaites. (It is noteworthy that his sarcophagus was made of iron. Does it not, indeed, still remain in Rabbath of the Ammonites? It is thirteen and a half feet long and six feet wide according to standard measure.) (NET)

The first three verses in the chapter are virtually the same as in the last three verses of Number 21. The following verses are an enlargement of the events described in the first three verses.

Deuteronomy 3:12-20, This is the land we brought under our control at that time: The territory extending from Aroer by the Wadi Arnon and half the Gilead hill country with its cities I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites. The rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, that is, all Bashan, is called the land of Rephaim. Jair, son of Manasseh, took all the Argob region as far as
the border with the Geshurites and Maacathites (namely Bashan) and called it by his name, Havvoth Jair, which it retains to this very day.) I gave Gilead to Machir. To the Reubenites and Gadites I allocated the territory extending from Gilead as far as Wadi Arnon (the exact middle of the wadi was a boundary) all the way to the Wadi Jabbok, the Ammonite border. The Arabah and the Jordan River were also a border, from the sea of Kinnereth to the sea of the Arabah (that is, the Salt Sea), beneath the watershed of Pisgah to the east. At that time I instructed you as follows: “The LORD your God has given you this land for your possession. You warriors are to cross over before your fellow Israelites equipped for battle. But your wives, children, and livestock (of which I know you have many) may remain in the cities I have given you. You must fight until the LORD gives your countrymen victory as he did you and they take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Then each of you may return to his own territory that I have given you.” (NET)

In Numbers, the story of Balak and Balaam interrupts this narrative along with a story of Israel’s misbehavior with Moabite women. Moses chooses in his speech in Deuteronomy to leave out these details, then moves on to the division of the land which they have conquered on the East side of Jordan. This corresponds to about Numbers chapter 32.

Jair was a descendent of Manasseh and Machir who were members of the Manasseh tribe. These descendants of Joseph received this very nice land East of Jordan.
The area on the East side of the Jordan River known as Bashan was known as a fertile area (in fact, that appears to be the meaning of the very word, Bashan) and would have been coveted by many people. It is no wonder some of the tribes wanted to simply stay on the East side of Jordan and not enter the land of Canaan. Moses strictly warns these two and a half tribes that, while they may have the land, they must help their fellow Israelites conquer the remainder of the promised land. In Judges, not all of the tribes come to aid their comrades, and Deborah criticizes the lack of help (Judges 5:17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he abide with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, settling down by his landings.).

In later Biblical periods, the area of Bashan was known for cattle grazing and oak trees among other things.

Psalm 22:12, Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

Ezekiel 27:6, Of oaks of Bashan they made your oars; they made your deck of pines from the coasts of Cyprus, inlaid with ivory.

In the present time, Bashan was approximately what is now called the Golan Heights, a disputed area which was held by Syria when the nation of Syria was formed in 1946 and is currently (2014) held by Israel. Whoever controls the Golan Heights region controls much of the water that feeds the Jordan River, so it is very strategically placed, as well as being some of the most fertile land of the region. In fact, Golan is mentioned as a city of refuge in Deuteronomy 4.
Deuteronomy 3:21-22, I also commanded Joshua at the same time, “You have seen everything the LORD your God did to these two kings; he will do the same to all the kingdoms where you are going. Do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God will personally fight for you.” (NET)

The idea of the LORD your God fighting for you is an oft repeated one in the Old Testament. It first occurs in Exodus 14. (Exodus 14:14, The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” – NIV) This is the 2nd time that this phrase appears in Deuteronomy, as it is first found in Deuteronomy 1:30. It is also found in Deuteronomy 20 and in Joshua 23.

Deuteronomy 3:23-29, Moreover, at that time I pleaded with the LORD, “O, Lord God, you have begun to show me your greatness and strength. (What god in heaven or earth can rival your works and mighty deeds?) Let me please cross over to see the good land on the other side of the Jordan River—this good hill country and the Lebanon!” But the LORD was angry at me because of you and would not listen to me. Instead, he said to me, “Enough of that! Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. Go up to the top of Pisgah and take a good look to the west, north, south, and east, for you will not be allowed to cross the Jordan. Commission Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, because he will lead these people over and will enable them to inherit the land you will see.” So we settled down in the valley opposite Beth Peor. (NET)
This section at the end of chapter 3 illustrates Moses’ frustration with not being allowed to enter the land of promise. This statement, “angry with me on your account”, is found in three places in this first speech of Moses in the plains of Moab.

Deuteronomy 1:37 The LORD was angry with me also on your account, and said, ‘You also shall not go in there;
Deuteronomy 3:26 But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not hearken to me; and the LORD said to me, ‘Let it suffice you; speak no more to me of this matter.
Deuteronomy 4:21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me on your account, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

All of us who have entered into a large undertaking have wanted to see it through to completion. In this case, Moses had led these people forty (40) years toward the promised land. Certainly, Moses assumed that it was worth asking once again for God to reconsider. Here we see Moses interceding again, this time for himself rather than for the people. The “go over” or “cross over” Jordan theme occurs numerous times in chapters 2 and 3, so Moses is preparing the people as he longs to join them in the journey.

Here Moses is charged to go up to the top of Pisgah. Pisgah is a mountain in Moab, that is very near Mt. Nebo. It appears that Pisgah is used as a name for a general area or mountain range, and the top of Pisgah would then be the highest place in the area, or Mt. Nebo. In Deuteronomy 34:1, the top of Pisgah and Mt. Nebo seem to be equated.
God’s answer is to look out over the land and see what God has accomplished with His people, but also to proceed with the transition of leadership to Joshua, which is one of the primary focuses of the book of Deuteronomy. Instead of entering the land himself, Moses is to charge, encourage, and strengthen Joshua since he will lead the people into the land.
Questions on Deuteronomy 3:1-29

1. Why are the Israelites constantly reminded that it is God who fights for them? ________________________________________
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   ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
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2. We see some of the tribes caring for themselves and not assisting with the other tribes later in the book of Judges, despite promises of being one nation when in conflict here in Deuteronomy. Do we ever make promises that we intend to keep, but later find inconvenient? _________________________
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3. Here, we see Moses approaching the LORD boldly with a personal request. Do we have such a close relationship with God? ________________________________________________
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