

## Deuteronomy 3:1-22

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“Then we [Generation two] turned and went up the road to Bashan [recounting what happened in Numbers 21:33-35], and Og, king of Bashan, with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Edrei [displaying negative volition toward God and Israel].<sup>2</sup> “But the LORD said to me [calling Moses’ to focus on the Lord], ‘Do not fear him [i.e. don’t let fear control your mind], for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand [divine promise of victory]; and you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon [Moses was told to reflect on God’s faithfulness in deliverance from similar threats].’<sup>3</sup> “So the LORD our God delivered Og also, king of Bashan, with all his people into our hand, and we smote them until no survivor was left [God faithfully kept His word].<sup>4</sup> “We captured all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan [continuing military conquest toward Canaan].<sup>5</sup> “All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates and bars, besides a great many unwalled towns [great structures could not withstand the advance of God’s people].<sup>6</sup> “We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women and children of every city [חָרַם *charam* – utterly destroyed – devoted to destruction – because of their wickedness; see Deut 9:4-5].<sup>7</sup> “But all the animals and the spoil of the cities we took as our booty.<sup>8</sup> “Thus we took the land at that time from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan [Sihon and Og], from the valley of Arnon to Mount Hermon<sup>9</sup> (Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir):<sup>10</sup> all the cities of the plateau and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.<sup>11</sup> (For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bedstead was an iron bedstead; it is in Rabbah of the sons of Ammon [preserved as an historical artifact]. Its length was nine cubits and its width four cubits by ordinary cubit.)<sup>12</sup> “So we took possession of this land at that time. From Aroer, which is by the valley of Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead and its cities I gave to the Reubenites and to the Gadites [Moses begins to assign land to the tribes of Israel].<sup>13</sup> “The rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh, all the region of Argob (concerning all Bashan, it is called the land of Rephaim.<sup>14</sup> Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called it, *that is*, Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair, *as it is* to this day.)<sup>15</sup> “To Machir I gave Gilead.<sup>16</sup> “To the Reubenites and to the Gadites I gave from Gilead even as far as the valley of Arnon, the middle of the valley as a border and as far as the river Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon;<sup>17</sup> the Arabah also, with the Jordan as *a* border, from Chinnereth even as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah on the east.<sup>18</sup> “Then I commanded you at that time, saying, ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess it [theirs by divine right]; all you valiant men shall cross over [the Jordan River] armed before your brothers, the sons of Israel [who will possess the land west of the Jordan River].<sup>19</sup> ‘But your wives and your little ones and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in your cities which I have given you,<sup>20</sup> until the LORD gives rest to your fellow countrymen as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God will give them beyond the Jordan. Then [after helping their brothers win the territory of Canaan] you may return every man to his possession which I have given you.’<sup>21</sup> “I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the

LORD your God has done to these two kings [reminded Joshua of God's past faithfulness]; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. <sup>22</sup> 'Do not fear them [from the standpoint of human perception], for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you [cf. Deut 1:30; 2:31-36; 3:2-3; 20:4; divine perspective strengthened their confidence for trials ahead].'"

### Summary:

In this pericope, Moses recounts the historical defeat of Og (Deut 3:1-3), reveals the territory obtained by their victory (Deut 3:4-11), and explains how the land east of the Jordan was allotted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh (Deut 3:12-22). As Moses and the Israelites advanced northward, they were met by Og, king of Bashan and his people who came out against them for war (Deut 3:1). This was a display of hostility toward God and His people. But the Lord instructed Moses to look to Him and to reflect on His past faithfulness in which He had delivered them in a similar situation, when He defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites (Deut 3:2). By looking to God and reflecting on His past deliverances, Moses' faith was strengthened and he could move forward in confidence rather than fear. Confidence is not necessarily the absence of fear, but the overcoming of fear to do God's will. As Moses and Israel went forward, God delivered Og and his people into their hand and all their cities were taken as spoils of military conquest (Deut 3:3-4, 7-8). There was no fortification nor human resistance that could stop the advance of God's people (Deut 3:5-6). We then have a description of the territory that was taken (Deut 3:9-10), as well as a comment about Og's bed, that was apparently kept as an historical attraction to demonstrate his physical size (Deut 3:11). Having taken possession of the land of the Amorites east of the Jordan River, Moses then divided the land north of the Valley of Arnon to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Deut 3:12-13, 16-17). Reuben and Gad were two of the sons of Jacob (Gen 29:32; 30:11), and the tribe of Joseph had split into two groups that were named after his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:8-16). Special mention is given to Jair, a son of Manasseh, and Machir, a subtribe of Manasseh, because of their great courage in battle (Deut. 3:14-15; cf. Num 32:39-41). Though all Israel were faithful to the Lord, apparently some fought harder than others and they were blessed in a special way with more land. The tribes of Manasseh, Reuben and Gad requested to live east of the Jordan River, and Moses granted their request, but only on the condition they would help their brothers complete the military conquest into Canaan beyond the Jordan River (Deut 3:18). They would help their fellow Israelites by leaving their wives, children, and livestock behind (Deut 3:19). After victory was obtained, they could return to their own land (Deut 3:20). We know from the book of Joshua that they were faithful to help their brothers (Josh 22:1-6). Moses then encouraged Joshua, his theocratic successor, to contemplate God's past faithfulness and draw strength from it as they moved forward into Canaan (Deut 3:21). By thinking divine viewpoint, Joshua would "not fear them" (Deut 3:22a), as he would realize "the LORD your God is the one fighting for you" (Deut 3:22b). The defeat of Sihon and Og would have sent a message to the residents of Canaan that would have instilled fear in them, which is what God intended (Deut 11:25; Josh 2:8-11). In addition, these victories over Sihon and Og were designed to prepare Israel for what lay ahead and to give them confidence that God was with them to defeat their enemies. What was required of Moses and the Israelites was to obey God's commands, trust Him at His Word, and face the enemy with courage.

