

Deuteronomy

Lesson 3

In Moses' summary of the past found in Chapter 1, he was looking back to when he was eighty-two years old, the Nation of Israel had been out of Egypt for two years and the camp was still licking their wounds at Kadesh-barnea from the terrible beating that they took from the Amorites who had chased them like bees and killed many of Israel's army. No doubt the nation had buried their dead and mourned for thirty days as was the custom it learned and carried on from their four hundred and thirty years of living in Egypt. In Chapter 2, Moses is now one-hundred and twenty years old and Moses' summary begins with the LORD's instruction for nation to leaving the wilderness of Mount Sinai by way of the Red Sea and ultimately camping for a long time at Mount Seir, a mountain range in the land of the Edomites. As we will see, Moses left out thirty-eight years of history between the last verse of Chapter 1 and the first verse of Chapter 2.

Chapters 2 and 3

Moses' Summary Mount Sinai to Plains of Moab

The Departure from Mount Seir – Year Forty Out of Egypt (2:1-3a)

Moses reports in the opening of Chapter 2, *"Then we turned and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and circled Mount Seir for many days. ² And the LORD spoke to me, saying, ^{3a} You have circled this mountain long enough."* (2:1-3a).

As Chapter 2 begins a few months after the Nation of Israel had left Mount Sinai for the second time and circled Mount Seir for many days. That means that Moses skipped through time in this summary and left thirty-eight years out of this book which included the journey back to Mount Sinai thirty-eight years before after the terrible rebellion against the LORD and the beating by the Amorites that followed the report of the spies about the Promised Land. All the events that occurred during the thirty-eight years after the spy debacle as recorded in Numbers 15 – 21:9. Here is a list of the recorded events missing in Moses' summary in Deuteronomy.

The instructions for sin offerings at Mount Sinai (Numbers 15:1-31).

The penalty for gathering wood on the Sabbath (15:32-36).

The instruction to add tassels to the corners of their garments (15:37-41)

The rebellion of the two-hundred and fifty leaders and their deaths (Numbers 16:1-40).

The grumbling against Moses and fourteen thousand seven hundred die (16:41-50).

The sprouting of Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:1-13).

The instruction to Aaron and his sons and the Levites about the do's and don't's of their jobs (Numbers 18:1-32).

The Red Heifer Ceremony (Numbers 19:1-20).

The second departure from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea where Miriam died (Numbers 20:1).

The sin of Moses striking the rock for water (Numbers 20:2-13).

The Edomites reject the passage of Israel through their land twice (Numbers 20:14-21).

The Nation of Israel caravanned to Mount Hor on the mountain range of Mount Seir where Aaron died and was buried, where Eleazar became High Priest and Aaron's death was mourned for thirty days (Numbers 20:22-29).

The battle with the king of Arad the Canaanite (Numbers 21:1-4).

The impatience with God and Moses and the fiery serpents (Numbers 21:5-9).

No wonder the LORD said to the Nation of Israel, "You have circled this mountain long enough." (2:3a). Just a month or so the Edomites had twice denied the right for the Nation of Israel to travel through the Edomite land. Now the LORD addresses that again.

Through the Land of Edom (2:3b-7)

The LORD had the itinerary already planned for the Nation of Israel as they pressed on. It included how the Nation of Israel was to treat its cousins, the Nation of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. The LORD said to Moses, "^{3b} Now turn north, ⁴ and command the people, saying, 'You will pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful; ⁵ do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, even as little as a footstep because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. ⁶ You shall buy food from them with money so that you may eat, and you shall also purchase water from them with money so that you may drink. ⁷ For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing.'" (2:3b-7).

The Nation of Israel was clearly on its way to conquer and capture the Promised Land as was the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Leaving the Seir mountain range we are told in this passage that the nation will not take possession of the land belonging to the Edomites. Lest we forget, the Edomites are the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. The tribal area looked to Abraham and to Isaac as their fathers just as the descendants of Jacob and rightly so. The Edomite land was a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and Isaac just as much as the promise of the rest of Promised Land to the Israelites. Their land was theirs just as the LORD would give land to Israel. Neither would the Nation of Israel treat their cousins poorly or take advantage of them in anyway. Whether or not the Edomites wanted them to pass through the land, Israel followed the LORD's command and took the major trade route (highway) right through the middle of the Edomite land purchasing food and water from the Edomites on the journey. The LORD had blessed the Nation of Israel and He wanted His nation to bless their cousins.

Through the Land of Moab (2:8-13)

From the land of the Edomites, it was time for the Nation of Israel to caravan through the land of Moab. Moses said in verse 8, "⁸ So we passed beyond our brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road, away from Elath and from Ezion-geber. And we turned and passed through by the way of the wilderness of Moab. ⁹ Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession. ¹⁰ (The Emim lived there formerly, a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim. ¹¹ Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ¹² The Horites formerly lived in Seir, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place; just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave to them.) ¹³ Now arise and cross over the brook Zered yourselves.' So we crossed over the brook Zered" (2:8-13).

Before we move on in explaining the intent of this passage, you will notice that verses 10 – 12 are struck through in the Scripture and I did not read them. Why? Our modern versions of the Bible are extremely honest when it comes to the Scripture. Each version will handle oddities in different ways but in every case, the committees indicated how they handled these oddities in the forward instructions of each Bible version. We are using the New American Standard. In the instruction of that version we learn that any Scriptures placed in parenthesis means that those verses are not found in the oldest and most reliable copies of the Hebrew text. If we were to read these three verses, it would be clear that they are not written in the syntax of Moses' speaking and writing style. Second, we would also easily notice that these three verses are trying to clarify some of the things that have been said previously in the Book by tying loose ends together in the commentary. Seventy nine passages such as this are found in our Bibles. In each case, no doubt, some minister of the past wrote these notes in the margins of his copy of the text. When his copy was worn, torn and dirty, he would have a new copy made by a scribe. In the copy process, the notes in the margins were copied into the text. From that, down through the centuries, copies of copies of copies were made of the inserted notes. Third, it has been my strong conviction that any verses not found in the oldest and most reliable copies be ignored and skipped. In most of the seventy-nine locations, the inserted text confuses the intent of the LORD's will instead of clarifying it just as we have here. These are the reasons I have struck through these verses and ignored them in this study.

Moving on in our study, Moses summarized that they moved through the Edomite land as instructed by the LORD. The phrase "away from the Arabah road" does not mean that they avoided that road; rather, it means that they took the major trade route on the Arabah road that took them away from the Edomite land through Elath and Ezion-geber.

Elath and Ezion-geber were two Edomite towns that the Nation of Israel passed through on the caravan to the Moabite land. As they arrived near the land of Moab, the LORD invoked the same restrictions for Israel with Moab as it did with Edom. Why? The Moabites were also cousins of the Israelites. Moab was the son of Lot, Abraham's nephew. Just after the formation of the Dead Sea, Lot conceived Moab. When Moab became a man and established his tribe, the LORD gave Moab the land directly east of the Dead Sea. The northern border of Moab was delineated by the Arnon River. On that river, the town of Ar was one of the major villages of the Moabites.

Zered was the river that delineated the southern border of Moab with Edom. Moses' summary is basically saying here, we left the Seir mountain range and moved through the Edomite and Moabite land. Reaching the northern border of Moab in his summary, Moses stops to give a time marker in his journey with Israel.

The Number of Years from Kadesh-barnea to Mount Seir (2:14-15)

We come to the place in Moses' summary where we find that Moses' summary skipped through a great deal of history from the last verse in Chapter 1 with the Nation of Israel still at Kadesh-barnea until they arrived at the southern border of Moab. Verse 14 says, *"¹⁴ Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. ¹⁵ Moreover the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished"* (2:14-15).

From the debacle after the refusal to enter the Promised Land after the return of the spies until the Nation of Israel finally arrived at the southern border of Moab, it was thirty-eight years. As the Scripture indicates, during that time, everyone over the age of twenty, not including those that had been pardoned by the LORD – Moses, Caleb and his family, Joshua and his family, were dead and buried in the sands. Aaron was not the last to die. After Aaron had died and was buried on Mount Hor, many died in the event with the fiery serpents. In addition, some died on the way to the northern border of Moab.

Through the Land of Ammon (2:16-23)

In the summary, Moses indicated that some those who needed to die as promised by the LORD thirty-eight years before, did not occur until the nation reached the northern border of Moab. We read in verse 16, *“¹⁶ So it came about when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, ¹⁷ that the LORD spoke to me, saying, ¹⁸ Today you shall cross over Ar, the border of Moab. ¹⁹ When you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession.”*²⁰ ~~(It is also regarded as the land of the Rephaim, for Rephaim formerly lived in it, but the Ammonites call them Zamzummin, ²¹ a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim, but the LORD destroyed them before them. And they dispossessed them and settled in their place, ²² just as He did for the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them; they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. ²³ And the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the ^bCaphtorim who came from ^cCaphtor, destroyed them and lived in their place.)~~ (2:16-23).

Note that verses 20 through 23 are stuck through and we did not read them for the same reason that was noted in verses 10-12 of this chapter.

Just over the Ar River was the land of the Ammons. The Ammonites were the descendants of Ammon, the son of Lot, the brother of Moab. The LORD would not give the land of Ammon to the Israelites to be part of their Promised Land for the same reason He would not give the land of Moab. Both were cousins of Israel. The LORD instructed Israel to treat them kindly.

The Promise of the Amorite Land (2:24-25)

²⁴ ‘Arise, set out, and pass through the “valley of Arnon. Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand; begin to take possession and contend with him in battle.

²⁵ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

You might think that crossing the Ar River from Moab would take you directly into the land of his brother, Ammon, but that depends on where you are on the Ar River. Ammon's land was vast but it did not cross the mountain range on its west border or reach to the Jordan River. That land was controlled by the Amorites and King Sihon. This must be why the LORD did not tell Moses to buy food and water from the Ammonites. The Israelites were not going to cross into their land, but they were going to go into the land opposite the Ammonites on their west side by the Jordan River in the land of the Amorites.

Israel would not get the land of Ammon but they would get the land of the Amorites.

The Message to Sihon (2:26-31)

Knowing that the Nation of Israel was going to head into the Amorite land, Moses sent a message ahead. It was not taken well by Sihon, the Amorite king as the passage states in verse 26. *“²⁶ So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, ²⁷ Let me pass through your land, I will travel only on the highway; I will not turn aside to the right or to the left. ²⁸ You will sell me food for money so that I may eat, and give me water for money so that I may drink, only let me pass through on foot, ²⁹ just as the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I cross over the Jordan into the land which the LORD our God is giving to us.”*³⁰ *But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today. ³¹ The LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to occupy, that you may possess his land’* (2:26-31).



The offer to buy food and water did not work with Sihon the way it did with Edom and Moab. So the LORD told Israel to start taking the land. Of course, the cloud by day and the fire by night was still going ahead of the Nation of Israel to fight for them.

The Battle with Sihon (2:32-37)

Reading on, Moses summarized the battle with Sihon as follows in verse 32. ³² *Then Sihon with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz.* ³³ *The LORD our God delivered him over to us, and we ^bdefeated him with his sons and all his people.* ³⁴ *So we captured all his cities at that time and ^autterly destroyed the men, women and children of every city. We left no survivor.* ³⁵ *We took only the animals as our booty and the spoil of the cities which we had captured.* ³⁶ *From Arzer which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon and from the city which is in the valley, even to Gilead, there was no city that was too high for us; the LORD our God delivered all over to us.* ³⁷ *Only you did not go near to the land of the sons of Ammon, all along the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, and wherever the LORD our God had commanded us" (2:32-37).*

The site of Jahaz is unknown except for the battle that occurred there and recorded in this passage where Sihon, an Amorite king and owner of the land east of the Jordan River and west of the Ammonite land, was defeated and the Amorite land became the property of Israel. Finally, the first part of the Promised Land belonged to the nation. The long awaited and expected promise of the LORD was unfolding. Moses continued in his summary with the Battle with Og.

The Battle with Og (3:1-7)

Og was another Amorite king who owned the land north of Sihon and the Ammonites. His territory was much larger than that of Sihon. Chapter 3 verse 1 says about this battle, ¹ *Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og, king of Bashan, with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Edrei.* ² *But the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.'* ³ *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.* ⁴ *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.* ⁵ *All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates and bars, besides a great many unvalled towns.* ⁶ *We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, ^butterly destroying the men, women and children of every city.* ⁷ *But all the animals and the spoil of the cities we took as our booty" (3:1-7).*

With the battle over, the land and wealth of the Nation of Israel greatly increased. The nation now owned all the Amorite land of Sihon and Og. They owned sixty fortified cities, the region of Argob with was the large tract of land on the east side of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee with included the famed lands of Gilead and Bashan. Notice also that all the Amorites were killed but their animals, homes and furnishings were not destroyed. These became the property of Israel.

The Land of the Amorites (3:8-11)

How much land had the Nation of Israel taken from the Amorites? It was vast. Verse 8. ⁸ *Thus we took the land at that time from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of Arnon to Mount Hermon* ⁹ *(Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir):* ¹⁰ *all the cities of the plateau and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salekah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.*

¹¹ *(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. Its length was nine cubits and its width four cubits by ordinary cubit.) (3:8-11).*

Once again, there are verse in this passage that were not in the oldest and most reliable copies of the Hebrew Scripture; therefore, they are struck and ignored.

The land taken by the Israelites in the battles against Sihon and Og captured the land from above the western half of Moab's land to Mount Hermon. It varied in width but it mileage from Moab to Hermon was one hundred and ten miles.

To the Reubenites and Gadites (3:12-17)

The story of the request for the tribes of Reuben and Gad is found in Numbers 32. There in Numbers we see that half of the tribe of Manasseh is included in the gift of the land on the east side of the Jordan River, the land of the Amorites taken by the Israelites. Here Moses quickly summarized that distribution.

Verse 12. *“¹² 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. ¹³ *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.*

¹⁴ *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, Havroth-jair, as it is to this day.)* ¹⁵ *“To Machir I gave Gilead.* ¹⁶ *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; ¹⁷ 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” (3:12-17).*

We did not read a of verse 13 and all of verse 14 for the same reasons as before, they are not part of the oldest and most reliable copies of the Hebrew Scripture.

The names of four locations are mentioned here and need to be explained. First, *Machir* was one of the leaders of the tribe of Manasseh and would be the patriarch of the half of that tribe that would make its home on the east side of the Jordan River. *Chinnereth* is the old name Canaanite name for the Sea of Galilee. *The Sea of the Arabah, the Slat Sea*, is the Dead Sea. *Pisgah* is the mountain range where Mount Nebo is located.

So, in reality, Moses was allowed to lead the Nation of Israel in the conquest of the Promised Land in the east side of the Jordan River. He was able to help with the determination of the boundaries of the land given to Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

The Possession of the Amorite Land (3:18-20)

But in the decision to give the land east of the Jordan River to Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh, there was a caveat. Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh had to help take all the Promised Land on the west side of the Jordan River. Verse 18. *“¹⁸ Then I commanded you at that time, saying, ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess it; all you valiant men shall cross over armed before your brothers, the sons of Israel.’ ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ 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 you may return every man to his possession which I have given you.” (3:18-20).*

The capture of all the Amorite land on the east side of the Jordan River, with all of its fortified cities and their established infrastructures, allowed for a place for all the women and children of the nation of Israel to live while the Jewish men of war crossed the Jordan River and conquered the Promised Land.



The Command to Joshua (3:21-22)

The LORD had a conversation with Moses at this time in the story and it is found in Numbers 27. There the LORD told Moses that it was time for Joshua to be charged with taking the rest of the Promise Land with the nation as its new leader. Moses had the responsibility to start that conversation with Joshua and here is Moses' summary of how it happened. Verse 21. *"²¹ I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. ²² Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you.'"* (3:21-22).

Joshua was a good second in command. He was a good student. He would make a good leader. He had seen all that the LORD had done for Israel in the past forty years under the leadership of Moses and Moses wanted Joshua to know that the LORD would do the same with Joshua under his leadership.

Moses Pled to See the Land East of the Jordan (3:23-25)

But even knowing the command of the LORD to put Joshua in charge of the nation, Moses still pleaded with the LORD to allow him to carry on as the leader to the west side of the Jordan. Verse 23. *"²³ I also pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, ²⁴ 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? ²⁵ Let me, I pray, cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon'"* (3:23-25).

Our LORD is a big God. We can ask of Him any and every heart's desire that we can imagine. But that does not mean the LORD will change His mind, as in this case with Moses, once the LORD had already given Moses His command for the future.

Moses Denied to Enter the Promised Land (3:26)

The answer from the LORD was a strong "no." Verse 26. *"²⁶ But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; and the LORD said to me, 'Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter'"* (3:26).

The LORD's mind was made up. Moses summarized how he felt about the interaction with the LORD. Moses said, *He was angry with me, would not listen to me.* Moses drew all of that from what the LORD actually said to Moses, *"Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter"* (3:26b).

Moses To See the Promised Land (3:27)

The LORD would not allow Moses to cross the Jordan River as the leader of Israel, but He would allow Moses to see the Promised Land. Verse 27. *"²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north and south and east, and see it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan"* (3:27).

As we mentioned before in this lesson, *Pisgah*, which means *summit*, was the highest area on the mountain range near Mount Nebo. Some scholars say Pisgah is another name for Mount Nebo, but that is pure speculation. In Numbers 23:14, Balaam, (of Balaam and his talking donkey), gave an speech in the field of Zophim where seven altars were built on Pisgah. Other scholars say that Pisgah is a high plateau north west of Mount Nebo. This explanation is more plausible. Being I high plateau on that mountain range would allow Moses to see all of almost all of the Promised Land on that was on the west side of the Jordan River. Surely, it was high enough to ensure that the LORD's word would be fulfilled and enable Moses to see all of the Promised Land.

Joshua Charged with Taking the Promised Land (3:28)

But in Moses' summary of the history of the forty years together, before Moses gave the prepared summary of all the laws, Moses charged with Joshua with the fact that he would Israel's next leader. Verse 28 says, *"²⁸ But charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he will give them as an inheritance the land which you will see"* (3:28).

The Promised Land Camp in Valley (3:29)

Finally, to end Chapter 3 and his short history of the past forty years, Moses said, *“²⁹ So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor”* (3:29). Beth-peor is located on the same side of the Jordan River as the camp of Israel in the Plains of Moab. It housed a temple of Baal-peor where abominable idolatry was practiced by the Moabites. It was east of the camp, or forward for the camp which meant it was *east of the camp*. Being the place of the *temple of Baal-peor* meant that it was a high place on the mountains somewhere. According to Joshua 13:20, it was located on the slopes of *Pisgah*. According to Deuteronomy 34:6, Moses would be buried by the LORD in the valley near Beth-peor although he died on Mount Nebo, near Pisgah.

The history summary was over. It was now to give a review of the law summary. We will begin that journey in Chapter 4 and the next lesson.