

Deut. 3:1 Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

Deut. 3:2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

As Moses continues his historical narrative, he comes to their encounter with Og, the king of Bashan, and his armies. At that time YHWH told Moses that they need not fear them because He was going to deliver them and their land to the Israelites just as he had with Sihon and the Amorites.

Point is made that the victories of the Israelites were not based on their strength and cunning, but on God's empowerment and provision. Any time we act in submission and obedience to God's will, we can count on accomplishing His purpose.

Deut. 3:3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining.

Deut. 3:4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

Deut. 3:5 All these cities *were* fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many.

Deut. 3:6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city.

Deut. 3:7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.

Just as God had said, He empowered the Israelites to defeat the kingdom of Og. In the process they conquered every city in the kingdom—a total of 60 cities plus many of the surrounding unwalled towns. The victory of the Israelites was quite impressive. The cities they conquered were all protected by high walls, gates and bars. Again, they killed every man, woman and child as God had instructed. They were, however, allowed to keep the cattle and material spoils of their victory.

Again, the actions of the conquering Israelites seem cruel; but they are not, they are obeying holy, righteous YHWH, the creator of life. These people had already made their eternal choice. God's purpose is to establish His people in their land without the wicked influence of the heathen nations. This is the act of a loving Father.

Deut. 3:8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that *was* on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;

Deut. 3:9 (*Which* Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;)

Deut. 3:10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

Deut. 3:11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead *was* a bedstead of iron; *is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits *was* the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

It would seem that this victory completed the possession of the land east of Jordan that God was giving to Israel. It stretched from the River Arnon in the south to Mount Hermon in the north and included the cities of the plain and Gilead. Moses then makes note that Og, king of Bashan, was the last of the giants; his iron bed measured 9 x 4 cubits, or about 14 x 6 feet.

Deut. 3:12 And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

Deut. 3:13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.

Deut. 3:14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day.

Deut. 3:15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir.

The southern part of this region, from the river Arnon to half of Gilead, was divided between Reuben and Gad; the rest of Gilead and Og's kingdom was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, to his sons Machir and Jair respectively.

Again, it is interesting to note that God is giving specific instruction as to whom the land is assigned. Each tribe will be given specific allotments as determined by God.

Deut. 3:16 And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon;

Deut. 3:17 The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, under Ashdothpisgah eastward.

Point is made that the region given to Reuben and Gad was separated from the land of the Ammonites by the river Jabbok. It extended from the coasts of Chinnereth (the Sea of Galilee) to the salt sea (the Dead Sea).

Although not referenced here, the book of Numbers records that the tribes of Reuben and Gad raised cattle and recognized this area as well suited to their needs, so they went and asked Moses to give them this land.

Num. 32:1-5 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle; The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for cattle, and thy

servants have cattle: Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jordan.

Their request was granted based on conditions that Moses recounts in the following verses. I would assume that the sons of Manasseh who were included in this distribution east of the Jordan had similar needs.

I think this is one of many examples in scripture that reflect how God wants to bless those who follow Him as Lord. They are still held accountable, however, to shoulder their responsibility in subduing the land for their nation as a whole in accordance with God's plan.

Deut. 3:18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all *that are* meet for the war.

Deut. 3:19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (*for I know that ye have much cattle,*) shall abide in your cities which I have given you;

Deut. 3:20 Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and *until* they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and *then* shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

God granted the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad based on their commitment to send all those qualified as soldiers to fight alongside their brothers as they conquered the rest of the land. They were allowed to leave their wives, children and cattle behind in the cities they had conquered. Once the land had been conquered and divided among the other tribes, they would be allowed to return to their homes.

As I read this section of verses, I was reminded of the narrative when Jesus got into the boat with His disciples and instructed them to go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee; they encountered a terrible storm and became very afraid. Jesus was asleep, so they woke Him up and He rebuked the wind and water and calmed the sea. Then He turned to His disciples and asked, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25) In other words, they should have had faith in His ability to get them to the other side since they were acting in obedience to His command. This tells me that the women, children and cattle would be protected and provided for by the Lord until their men returned home since they were acting according to God's instruction.

Deut. 3:21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest.

Deut. 3:22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

The two kings being referenced are Og and Sihon. These were two powerful kings that God had enabled the people of Israel to destroy and possess their kingdoms. Moses notes that he took advantage of the opportunity to instruct Joshua that God would do the same for Him when He succeeded Moses as God's

chosen leader of the people. He had no reason to fear any enemy they would face as they continued to follow God in obedience.

It's a hard thing to get beyond human reasoning and trust the Lord when obedience goes against logic or seems to call for the impossible. But that is exactly the kind of faith and obedience that gives God the glory.

Deut. 3:23 And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,

Deut. 3:24 O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God *is there* in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

Deut. 3:25 I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that *is* beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

Deut. 3:26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

Deut. 3:27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold *it* with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

For the second time in these first three chapters Moses makes reference to the fact that He is not being allowed to enter the Promised Land. And for the second time in these first three chapters he blamed God's anger with him on the people. In all honesty, I can relate. I can think of times in my life when I've responded the wrong way in situations and justified my response due to the provocation of someone else. Bottom line is—We have no one to blame for our sins but ourselves.

Overall, Moses has been a faithful, obedient servant to the Lord. He had endured the wilderness wanderings with the people and was finally getting to see God's promise of establishing them in their own land begin to become a reality. It was exciting. So, just like any kid, he tried to butter the Lord up with praise in hopes of getting Him to change His mind and let him go see the land up close and personal. It backfired; he made the Lord angry and was told not to mention the matter again. Though remaining true to His word that Moses would not be allowed to cross Jordan, the Lord did allow Moses to go to the top of Pisgah and look out in all directions to see the land.

As usual, God is the best parent and the best master. Moses was in a position of great privilege and authority before the Lord; with that position came great responsibility. I'm reminded of the Lord's teaching, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke 12:48) The Lord is careful to guard the honor of His name, and He is focused on our spiritual well being. Acceding to Moses' request would have sent the wrong message to the people. It's very important to understand that disobeying God has serious consequences.

Deut. 3:28 But charge 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 thou shalt see.

Moses' responsibility was to instruct, encourage and strengthen Joshua in preparation to assuming the leadership of the people.

As I thought about this verse, I made a connection as a parent. Our responsibility is to instruct, encourage and strengthen our children in preparation for serving God in faith in submission and obedience to His will. This application continues to be valid in reference to those in leadership in the church as they train others to assume the positions and responsibilities God's plan holds for them.

Deut. 3:29 So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.

This appears to provide a time for instruction and preparation for the people as a whole as they prepare to cross Jordan and the mantle of leadership shifts from Moses to Joshua.