

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 2

In this chapter Moses goes on with his account of the affairs of the people of Israel, and what befell them, how they turned into the wilderness again; but passes over in silence their travels there, till they came to Mount Self, where having been some time they were bid to depart, (^{<R11>}Deuteronomy 2:1-3), and were directed not to meddle with the Edomites, or take anything from them, but pay them for what they should have of them, since they lacked not, (^{<R11>}Deuteronomy 2:4-8), nor to distress the Moabites, of whose country, as formerly inhabited, and also of Edom, some account is given, (^{<R11>}Deuteronomy 2:9-12), when they were bid to go over the brook Zered, to which from their coming from Kadeshbarnea was the space of thirty eight years, in which time the former generation was consumed, (^{<R13>}Deuteronomy 2:13-16) and now passing along the borders of Moab, they were ordered not to meddle with nor distress the children of Ammon, of whose land also, and the former inhabitants of it, an account is given, (^{<R17>}Deuteronomy 2:17-23), then passing over the river Arnon, they are bid to fight with Sihon king of the Amorites, and possess his land, (^{<R24>}Deuteronomy 2:24,25) to whom they sent messengers, desiring leave to pass through his land, and to furnish them with provisions for their money, as the Edomites and Moabites had done, (^{<R26>}Deuteronomy 2:26-29) but he refusing, this gave them an opportunity to attack him, in which they succeeded, slew him and his people, and took possession of his country, (^{<R30>}Deuteronomy 2:30-37).

Ver. 1. *Then we turned*, etc.] From Kadesh, where they had been many days, and so also their backs on the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they had been:

and took our journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me; (^{<R40>}Deuteronomy 1:40)

and we compassed Mount Seir many days; many think by Mount Seir is meant the whole mountainous country of Edom, about which they travelled to and fro in the wilderness that lay near it for the space of thirty eight

years, which they suppose are meant by many days; but I rather think they came to this mount towards the close of the thirty eight years, before they came to Kadesh, from whence they sent messengers to Edom, which they went round about for several days,

Ver. 2. *And the Lord spake unto me*, etc.] While about Mount Seir:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 3. *Ye have compassed this mountain long enough*, etc.] It was time to be gone from thence, as from Horeb, (^{4800b}Deuteronomy 1:6),

turn you northward; from the southern border of Edom towards the land of Canaan, which lay north. It was from Eziongeber in the land of Edom, from whence the Israelites came to Kadesh, where they sent messengers to the king of Edom, to desire a passage through his land; (see ^{4033b}Numbers 33:36 20:14).

Ver. 4. *And command thou the people*, etc.] Give them a strict charge:

saying, ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children or Esau: not through the midst of their country, for that the king of Edom would not admit of, but by or on the border of it:

and they shall be afraid of you; lest such a numerous body of people as Israel were should seize upon their country, and dispossess them of it, they having been so long, wanderers in a wilderness near them:

take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore; that they did not take any advantage of their fears, and fall upon them, and do them mischief, or that they did not provoke them to battle and overcome them.

Ver. 5 *Meddle not with them*, etc.] Contend not with them in battle, nor provoke them to it:

for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot breadth; or as the sole of a man's foot can tread on, signifying that they should not have the least part of it, not any at all. Jarchi makes mention of an exposition of theirs, that he would give them nothing of it until should come the day of the treading of the sole of the foot in the mount of Olives, (^{3846b}Zechariah 14:4), meaning not till the days of the Messiah, when Edom should be a possession of Israel; (see ^{4048b}Numbers 24:18), (Obidiah 1:19)

because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession; and therefore not to be taken away from them; they have a right of inheritance of it; (see ~~Gen~~Genesis 36:8 ~~Josh~~Joshua 24:4).

Ver. 6 *Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat*, etc.] That is, if they would, as Aben Ezra observes; for though they had manna daily, yet if they would they might buy other food when they had an opportunity, as they would now have of Edom; but then they were not to take it by force or stealth, but pay for it, which they were able to do. The same writer observes, that some read the words with an interrogation, “shall ye buy meat?” no, there is no need of it; for the Lord had blessed them with a sufficiency of it:

and ye shall also buy water of them for money; that ye may drink; which was usual in those hot countries; (see Gill on “~~Num~~Numbers 20:19”) or dig water ^{f23} that is, pay for digging of wells for water, or buy water out of wells dug in the land of Edom. Jarchi says in maritime places they express buying by this word, and so it is used in the Arabic language; (see Gill on “~~Hos~~Hosea 3:2”).

Ver. 7. *For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thine hands*, etc.] Had increased their cattle and substance, even though in a wilderness:

he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness; every step they took, and he owned them and prospered them in all things in which they were concerned:

these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee: not only to protect and defend them, but to provide all things necessary for them. This number of years was not fully completed, but the round number is given instead of the broken one:

thou hast lacked nothing: and since they had wherewith to pay for their food and drink, they are directed to do it, and not take anything from the Edomites in an unjust way; nor make themselves look poor when they were rich, as Jarchi says.

Ver. 8. *And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Self*, etc.] Along their coasts, by the borders of their country:

through the way of the plain; the wilderness of Zin, where Kadesh was:

from Elath and Eziongeber; the two ports on the shore of the Red sea in the land of Edom; it was from the latter they came to Kadesh; (see ^{<0635>}Numbers 33:35,36). Elath was ten miles from Petra, the metropolis of Edom, to the east of it, as Jerom says ^{f24}; it is by Josephus ^{f25} called Aelana, and by the Septuagint here Ailon; from whence the Elanitic bay has its name; he speaks of it as not far from Eziongeber, which he says was then called Berenice:

we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab; the wilderness which is before Moab, towards the sun rising or the east, (^{<0211>}Numbers 21:11).

Ver. 9. *And the Lord said unto me*, etc.] When upon the borders of Moab:

distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; besiege not any of their cities, nor draw them into a battle, or provoke them to fight:

for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; at least not as yet, the measure of their sins not being fully up, and the time of their punishment not come; otherwise in David's time they were subdued, and became tributaries to him, and the Edomites also, (^{<0082>}2 Samuel 8:2,14),

because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession; so the Moabites were, they sprung from Moab, a son of Lot by his firstborn daughter, (^{<0197>}Genesis 19:37). Ar was the metropolis of Moab, called Ar of Moab, (^{<2350>}Isaiah 15:1) and is here put for the whole country of Moab; so Aben Ezra interprets it of Moab. Jarchi says it is the name of the province; in the Septuagint version it called Aroer.

Ver. 10. *The Emims dwelt there in time past*, etc.] We read of them as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, (^{<0145>}Genesis 14:5) when their dwelling was in Kirjathaim, a city which Sihon king of the Amorites took from the Moabites, and which being taken from him, was with others given to the tribe of Reuben, (^{<0637>}Numbers 32:37). These are by some thought to be the same with the Yemim which Anah found and met with in the wilderness, and defeated, which we render "mules", (^{<0354>}Genesis 36:24). They had their name from the fear and terror they put men into because of their gigantic stature and great strength, as follows: it is probable they were the descendants of Ham:

a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims; who were very numerous, of a very bulky size of body, and of high stature, like the giants the spies had seen at Hebron, the sons of Anak, a noted giant there, (^{<0132>}Numbers 13:22,23).

Ver. 11. *Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims*, etc.] Because of their bulky size and tall stature; or,

“the Rephaim were they accounted, even they as the Anakims;”

they were reckoned Rephaim, a name for giants in early times, even as the Anakims were; (see ^{<0145>}Genesis 14:5)

but the Moabites called them Emims; to distinguish them from the Rephaim; so that it seems this name of Emims was not originally their name, but they are called so by a prolepsis, or anticipation, in (^{<0145>}Genesis 14:5) since they had it from the Moabites, a people of a later date.

Ver. 12. *The Horims also dwelt in Seir before time*, etc.] Which is the name of a mount, and so of the country, from it; so called from Seir the Horite, who dwelt in it before it was possessed by Esau and his sons; but who the Horim or Horites were, from whence they had their name, is difficult to say; they were as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, (^{<0145>}Genesis 14:6). They seem to be so called from their dwelling in holes and caves in rocks, which the southern part of Edom or Idumea was full of, and to be the same the Greeks call Troglodytae:

but the children of Esau succeeded them; Esau and his sons marrying among them, made way for getting the country into their possession, as appears from (^{<0302>}Genesis 36:2,8,12,20,25) and in which they afterwards settled themselves by the dint of sword, since it follows:

when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; even in Seir where they had dwelt, afterwards called Edom, from one of the names of Esau, (^{<0308>}Genesis 36:8,9,20)

as Israel did in the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them; because this is said before the Canaanites were drove out of their land, and it was possessed by the Israelites, some think this was written by Ezra, or some other hand; but there is no need to suppose that; Moses, by a spirit of prophecy, and in faith of the promises and prophecies of God relating to this affair, which were just now about to be fulfilled, might write this;

besides, it may refer to what was already done to the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; which had been taken from them, and given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and the above instances as well as this may be observed, to encourage the people of Israel that they should succeed in dispossessing the Canaanites, and settling in their land, in like manner as dispossessions of this kind had already been made.

Ver. 13. *Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered*, etc.] It is called the valley of Zered, (^{Q12}Numbers 21:12), the word used signifying both a valley and a brook; and it is very probable there were both a valley and a brook of the same name; it must be near Dibongad, since in one place it is said the Israelites came from Ijim and pitched in Zered; and in another place that they came from thence, and pitched in Dibongad, (^{Q11}Numbers 21:11,12) and ^{Q35}*Numbers 33:45*

and we went over the brook Zered; which was fordable, or perhaps at this time dried up.

Ver. 14. *And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea*, etc.] The space of time; or, “the days”^{f26}; the number of them:

until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; that is, from the time that the spies were sent and searched the land, and brought a report of it; for they were sent from Kadeshbarnea, (^{Q18}Numbers 32:8) unto the passage of the Israelites over Zered, were thirty eight years; so long they had been travelling in the wilderness, after they were come to the borders of the land:

until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host; all that were twenty years old and upwards, and fit to go out to war upon occasion, when the people were first numbered after they came out of Egypt; all that generation was now consumed within the above space of time, excepting two, Caleb and Joshua;

as the Lord sware unto them; (^{Q21}Numbers 14:21,23,30).

Ver. 15. *For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them*, etc.] His power was exerted in a way of wrath and vengeance on them, for their murmurings at the report of the spies; and therefore, it is no wonder they were consumed, for strong is his hand, and high is his right hand; and when lifted up it falls heavy, and there is no standing up under it, or against it: it

smote them with one disease or another, or brought one judgment or another upon them: as the sword of Amalek, by which many were cut off, and the plague at Shittim in the plains of Moab, in which died 24,000; besides the destruction of Korah and his company, which was quickly after the affair of the spies, and the plague at that time, of which died 14,700; and thus, by one stroke after another, he went on to

destroy them from among the host until they were consumed, even all of them but two, as follows.

Ver. 16. *So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed*, etc.] By wasting diseases and judgments of one kind or another:

and dead from among the people; the rising and surviving generation.

Ver. 17. *That the Lord spoke unto me*, etc.] At the brook Zered, having passed that, or at Dibongad, which was their next station:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 18. *Thou art to pass over through Ar*, etc.] That is, over the river Arnon, by the city Ar of Moab, which was situated by it; (see ^{<6119>}Deuteronomy 2:9) and so Moses and the people of Israel were to pass along by that,

and by the coast of Moab; for they were not admitted to enter the land and pass through it; only to travel on the borders of it, and that they were to begin to do this day; the day the Lord spake to Moses.

Ver. 19. *And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon*, etc.] Who dwelt near the Moabites, and were brethren, both descending from Lot, (^{<01957>}Genesis 19:37,38)

distress them not, nor meddle with them: lay no siege to any of their cities, nor provoke them to war, nor engage in battle with them:

for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; that is, any part of it which was now in their hands; otherwise half their land was given to the tribe of Gad; but then that was what Sihon king of the Amorites had taken from them, and which Israel retook from him, and so possessed it not as the land of the Ammonites, but of the Amorites, one of the seven nations, whose land they were to inherit; (see ^{<6125>}Joshua 13:25 ^{<07113>}Judges 11:13-23),

because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession; the Ammonites were the children of Lot by his second daughter, (^{<0188>}Genesis 19:38).

Ver. 20. *That also was accounted a land of giants*, etc.] Ammon was so reckoned as well as Moab, (^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:10,11)

giants dwelt therein in old time; the Rephaim dwelt there, as they did also in Ashteroth Karnaim, (^{<0145>}Genesis 14:5)

and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims; they are thought to be the same with the Zuzims in (^{<0145>}Genesis 14:5) who had their name, as Hillerus ^{f27} thinks, from Mezuzah, a door post, from their tall stature, being as high as one; and for a like reason Saph the giant might have his name, (^{<018>}2 Samuel 21:18). The word Zamzummims, according to him ^{f28}, signifies contrivers of evil and terrible things; they were inventors of wickedness, crafty and subtle in forming wicked and mischievous designs, which struck terror into people, and made them formidable to them.

Ver. 21. *A people great and many, and tall as the Anakims*, etc.] As the Emims were, (^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:10) but the Lord destroyed them before them; destroyed the Zamzummims before the children of Amman; or otherwise they would have been an too much for them, being so numerous, and of such a gigantic stature:

and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead; and in this way, and by these means, he gave them their land for a possession, (^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:19).

Ver. 22. *As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir*, etc.] He did the like things for them as he did for the Ammonites:

when he destroyed the Horims from before them: which is repeated from (^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:12), other instances of the like kind being here recited:

and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead, even unto this day; (see Gill on “^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:12”).

Ver. 23. *And the Avim, which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah*, etc.] The same with the Avites, who appear to have inhabited some part of the land of the Philistines, in which Azzah or Gaza was, which was one of the five lordships of the Philistines, (^{<033>}Joshua 13:3). The word Hazerim signifies courts, and a learned man ^{f29} interprets it of tents or huts placed in

a square or circular form, so as to have an area in the middle; and in such the Avim may be supposed to dwell, while in Palestine, as far as Gaza:

the Caphtorim, which came from out of Caphtor, destroyed them; according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, these were Cappadocians, that came out of Cappadocia; but it seems manifest that they were originally of Egypt, (see ^{<0104>}Genesis 10:14) and Bochart ^{f30} thinks they went from thence into that part of Cappadocia that was near Colchis; but things not answering their expectations, they returned, and drove out the Avim from their country:

and dwelt in their stead; (see Gill on “^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:4”) (see Gill on “^{<3007>}Amos 9:7”). Though it seems as if they were not utterly destroyed, but some escaped into Assyria, and settled there, where was a place called Ava from them; and from whence they were sent by the king of Assyria to repeople the cities of Samaria, after the captivity of the ten tribes; (see ^{<2172>}2 Kings 17:24). Now these several instances are observed to encourage the children of Israel to hope and believe that they should be able to dispossess the Canaanites, and inherit their land; such dispossessions having been very frequent, when it was the will of God they should take place.

Ver. 24. *Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon,* etc.] Which was on the border of Moab, and divided between Moab and the Amorites, (^{<0213>}Numbers 21:13)

behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon, the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; that is, he had determined to give it to the Israelites, for as yet it was not actually given; of this king, and the place he was king of, (see Gill on “^{<0221>}Numbers 21:21 see Gill on “^{<0226>}Numbers 21:26”) begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle; provoke him to war, fight with him, take his land from him, and enter upon the possession of it, hereby assuring of victory.

Ver. 25. *This day will I begin to put the dread of thee,* etc.] And so fulfil the prophecies delivered by Moses in (^{<0254>}Exodus 15:14-16)

and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven; not only the neighbouring nations, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Canaanites, but nations more remote even throughout the whole world:

who shall report of thee; of what was done for Israel in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and particularly of the delivery of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and of their kingdoms into their hands:

and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee; lest they should proceed on, and make conquests of their lands also; (see ^{<f111>}Joshua 2:9-11).

Ver. 26. *And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth*, etc.] A city in the tribe of Reuben, and given by them to the Levites in later times, having been taken from the Amorites with others; near this lay a wilderness, which took its name from it, and seems to be the same with Jeshimon, (^{<f121>}Numbers 21:20,21 ^{<f1318>}Joshua 13:18 21:37). Aben Ezra takes it to be the wilderness of Matthanah, which according to Jerom ^{f31} was situated on Arnon, twelve miles to the east of Medeba; see (^{<f1218>}Numbers 21:18,30) from hence messengers were sent by Moses,

unto Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace; in a peaceable and respectful manner, desiring to be at peace and in friendship with him, and a continuance of it, which was done to leave him inexcusable; as afterwards a like method was ordered to be taken, when they came to any city, to proclaim peace, and if an answer of peace was given, no hostilities were to be committed, (^{<f1210>}Deuteronomy 20:10),

saying; as follows.

Ver. 27. *Let me pass through thy land*, etc.] (See Gill on "^{<f122>}Numbers 21:22"),

I will go along by the highway; the king's highway, as in the place referred to, the public road:

I will neither turn to the right hand nor to the left; to go into his fields and vineyards, and gather the fruit, or tread down the corn and vines, or do any manner of mischief to them; see the above place.

Ver. 28. *Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat*, etc.] If they thought fit to have provision of them, they desired no other but to pay for it:

and give me water for money, that I may drink; (see ^{<f116>}Deuteronomy 2:6),

only I will pass through on my feet; for they were all footmen, (⁴⁰¹²Numbers 11:21), of the phrase, (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹⁹Numbers 20:19”).

Ver. 29. *As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me*, etc.] Which respects, as Jarchi observes, not the affair of passing through their land requested, for neither of them granted that, but buying food and drink; for though the Edomites at first seem not to have granted that, yet afterwards they did. The mountain of Seir, and the city Ar, are put for the whole countries of Edom and Moab:

until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God giveth us; this is observed to remove any suspicion or jealousy of their seizing his country, and taking possession of it, and dwelling in it; since they only proposed to pass through it on their journey to the land of Canaan, which lay on the other side Jordan, over which they must pass in order to possess it, which they had a right unto by the gift of God.

Ver. 30. *But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him*, etc.] Or through his country, as was desired:

for the Lord had hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate; as he did Pharaoh's, for whom he will he hardens; so that he would not listen to the proposals made to him, nor grant the requests asked of him, but with pride and haughtiness of spirit despised and disdained Israel:

that he might deliver him into thine hand; that so an opportunity might offer of fighting with him, and taking his country from him; whereas, had he been peaceable and flexible, he had continued in the enjoyment of his land, and Israel would not have had that advantage against him; but God, who has the hearts of kings and of all men in his hands, so wrought upon him that he should take the steps he did, which made way for the delivery of him and his country into the hands of the Israelites:

as appeareth this day: for when Moses made this speech, the kingdom of Sihon was possessed by the Israelites, (⁴⁰²⁴Numbers 21:24,25).

Ver. 31. *And the Lord said unto me*, etc.] After or about the time when the messengers were sent to Sihon, perhaps when they had returned and had brought his answer:

behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee; by hardening his heart, which was a sure token of his ruin, and a leading step to the delivery of him into the hands of Israel:

begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land; move towards it and enter into it, not fearing any opposition made by him.

Ver. 32. *Then Sihon came out against us*, etc.] Perceiving they were upon their march towards his land or into it, he gathered all his people and went out of Heshbon their capital city, where he resided:

he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz; a city which he had taken from the king of Moab, and which in later times, after the captivity of the ten tribes, came into their hands again, (²³⁵⁰⁴Isaiah 15:4 ²⁴⁸²¹Jeremiah 48:21), (See Gill on “⁴⁰²¹²Numbers 21:21”).

Ver. 33. *And the Lord our God delivered him before us*, etc.] With their lands:

and we smote him and his sons, and all his people; with the edge of the sword; slew them all: the Cetib or textual reading is “his son”, though the Keri or margin is “his sons”, which we follow. So Jarchi observes, it is written “his son”, because he had a son mighty as himself, he says.

Ver. 34. *And we took all his cities at that time*, etc.] As Heshbon, and others mentioned in (⁴⁰²²⁵Numbers 21:25,30,32 32:3,34-38),

and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain; for the Amorites were one of the seven nations who were devoted to destruction, the measure of whose iniquity was now full, and therefore vengeance was taken.

Ver. 35. *Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves*, etc.] These they did not destroy, but preserved alive for their own use and profit, and took them as their own property:

and the spoil of the cities which we took; as household goods, gold, silver, and whatever valuable was found by them; this they took as plunder, and shared it among themselves.

Ver. 36. *From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river Arnon* etc.] Upon the border of Moab, and the principal city of it; (see ²⁴⁸¹⁹Jeremiah 48:19)

and from the city that is by the river; or even the city that is in the midst of the river, the city Aroer, which seems to be meant; (see ^{<6620>}Joshua 12:2 13:9). This river is afterwards called the river of Gad, (^{<1045>}2 Samuel 24:5) in the midst of it Aroer was, perhaps because it was possessed by the tribe of Gad:

even unto Gilead; Mount Gilead and the country adjacent to it, which belonged to Og king of Bashan:

there was not one city too strong for us; that could hold out against them, when attacked and besieged by them, but presently surrendered:

the Lord our God delivered all unto us; Moses ascribes all the victories and success they had unto the Lord, not to their own might and power, but to the power of God with them, and his blessing on them.

Ver. 37. *Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not*, etc.] Which was then in their possession; otherwise what Sihon had took away from them, that the children of Israel came into and enjoyed, as before observed, (^{<6620>}Deuteronomy 2:19)

nor unto any place of the river Jabbok; any town or city situated on this river, which was the border of the children of Ammon, (^{<6620>}Deuteronomy 3:16), (See Gill on “^{<6622>}Genesis 32:22”),

nor unto the cities in the mountains; much less did they penetrate into the innermost parts of their country, the mountainous part thereof, and the cities there:

nor unto whatsoever the Lord our God forbad us: whether in Edom, Moab, or Ammon, particularly the latter, of which he is more especially and peculiarly speaking.