

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 3

In this chapter the account is carried on of the conquest of the Amorites by Israel, of Og king of Bashan, and his kingdom, (^{<FR1>}Deuteronomy 3:1-11), and of the distribution of their country to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, (^{<FR12>}Deuteronomy 1:12-17) and then the command to the said tribes is observed, to go out armed before their brethren, and assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan, and then return to their possessions, (^{<FR18>}Deuteronomy 3:18-20) and also that to Joshua not to fear, but to do to the Canaanitish kings and kingdoms what he had seen done to the two kings of the Amorites, (^{<FR21,22>}Deuteronomy 3:21,22). After which Moses relates the request he made, to go over Jordan and see the good land, which was denied him, only he is bidden to look from the top of an hill to see it, (^{<FR23>}Deuteronomy 3:23-27). And the chapter is closed with the charge he was to give Joshua, (^{<FR28>}Deuteronomy 3:28) which was received in the valley where they abode, (^{<FR29>}Deuteronomy 3:29).

Ver. 1. *Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan*, etc.] Which seems to have been higher than the kingdom of Sihon: this was a fine country for pasturage, for the breeding of cattle, larger and lesser, and was famous for its oaks: it is the same country which in Josephus and others goes by the name of Batanea:

and Og the king of Bashan came out against us; got his forces together, and came out from Ashteroth, the royal city where he dwelt:

he and all his people, to battle at Edrei; another city in his kingdom, about six miles from the former; (see ^{<FR104>}Deuteronomy 1:4 ^{<FR13>}Numbers 21:33).

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto me*, etc.] When Og was marching with all his forces against Israel:

fear him not, etc; (See Gill on "^{<FR34>}Numbers 21:34").

Ver. 3. *So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people,* etc.] As well as Sihon king of Heshbon:

and we smote him, till none was left to him remaining; or left alive, all were slain with the sword; (See Gill on "^{<4025>}Numbers 21:35").

Ver. 4. *And we took all his cities at that time,* etc.] Not only Edrei where the battle was fought, and Ashteroth his capital city, but all the rest in his kingdom:

there was not a city which we took not from them; not one stood out, but all surrendered on summons; the number of which follows:

three score cities; which was a large number for so small a country, and shows it to be well inhabited:

all the region of Argob; which was a small province of

the kingdom of Og in Bashan: Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, that it was called after a man, i.e. whose name was Argob; the Targum of Onkelos names it Tracona, and the Targum of Jonathan Targona, the same with Trachonitis in Josephus and other authors; (see ^{<4100>}Luke 3:1), Jerom relates ^{f32} that in his time, about Gerasa, a city of Arabia, fifteen miles from it to the west, there was a village which was called Arga, which seems to carry in it some remains of the ancient name of this country; and the Samaritan version, in all places where Argob is, calls it Rigobaah; and in the Misnah ^{f33} mention is made of a place called Ragab, beyond Jordan, famous for its being the second place for the best oil.

Ver. 5. *All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars,* etc.] That is, all the cities in the kingdom of Bashan; and though they were, it hindered not their falling into the hands of the Israelites; and this might serve to encourage them against those fears they were possessed of by the spies, with respect to the cities in the land of Canaan; (see ^{<4133>}Numbers 13:28 ^{<4025>}Deuteronomy 1:28)

besides unwall'd towns a great many; small towns and villages adjacent to the several cities, as is common.

Ver. 6. *And we utterly destroyed them,* etc.] Not the cities, but the inhabitants of them:

as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon; they did not destroy his cities, for they took them and dwelt in them; but the people that lived there, as follows here:

utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city; (see ^{<4123>}Deuteronomy 2:34).

Ver. 7. *But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities*, etc.] The oxen and sheep, camels and asses; their gold and silver, and the furniture of their houses; their stores of corn, and of other fruits of the earth, even all their substance of whatsoever kind:

we took for a prey to ourselves; made them their own property, and used them for their own profit and service, whereby they became greatly enriched.

Ver. 8. *And we took at that time out of the hands of the two kings of the Amorites*, etc.] Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan;

the land that [was] on this side Jordan; where Moses then was, being in the plains of Moab, and was the country beyond Jordan, with respect to the land of Canaan, and when in that:

from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon; Arnon was a river which divided Moab and the Amorites, (^{<4023>}Numbers 22:13) and Hermon was a mountain of Gilead, which ended where Lebanon began, and was the northerly border of this country. It was remarkable for the dew that fell on it; (see Gill on "^{<4133>}Psalm 133:3").

Ver. 9. *Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion*, etc.] Which name it has in (^{<4126>}Psalm 29:6) a name the inhabitants of Sidon gave it, but for what reason it is not easy to say; however, that it was well known to Tyre and Sidon, appears from snow in summer time being brought to the former, as will be hereafter observed:

and the Amorites call it Shenir; in whose possession it was last. Bochart ^{f34} thinks it had its name from the multitude of wild cats in it, Shunar in the Chaldee tongue being the name of that creature; but Jarchi says Shenir in the Canaanitish language signifies "snow"; so, in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, it is called the mountain of snow; and the Hebrew who read to Jerom, and taught him, affirmed to him that this mountain hung over Paneas, from whence snow in summer time was brought to Tyre for

pleasure ^{f35}, and the same is confirmed by Abulfeda ^{f36}. There is said to be upon the top of it a famous temple, which is used for worship by the Heathens, over against Paneas and Lebanon ^{f37}; and it is highly probable there was one even at this time, when it was possessed by the Amorites, since it is called Mount Baalhermon, (^{<00B>}Judges 3:3), from the worship of Baal, or some other idol upon it, as it should seem. Besides these, it had another name, Mount Sion, (^{<00B>}Deuteronomy 4:48) but to be distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem. The names of it in this place are very differently interpreted by Hillerus ^{f38}; though he thinks it had them all on account of the snow on it, which was as a net all over it; for Hermon, he observes, signifies a net, a dragnet, and Shenir an apron, and Sirion a coat of mail, all from the covering of this mount with snow.

Ver. 10. *All the cities of the plain*, etc.] There was a plain by Medeba, and Heshbon and her cities were in a plain, with some others given to the tribe of Reuben, (^{<036>}Joshua 13:16,17)

and all Gilead; Mount Gilead, and the cities belonging to it, a very fruitful country, half of which fell to the share of the Reubenites, and the rest to the half tribe of Manasseh:

and all Bashan; of which Og was king, called Batanea, a very fertile country, as before observed:

unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; which seem to be frontier cities of the latter: (see ^{<00B>}Deuteronomy 1:4 3:1). The former, Adrichomius ^{f39} says, was situated by the city Geshur and Mount Hermon, and was the boundary of the country of Bashan to the north; and according to Benjamin of Tudela ^{f40}, it was half a day's journey from Gilead: as Edrei seems to be its boundary to the south.

Ver. 11. *For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants*, etc.] The meaning seems to be, either that he was the only one that was left of the race of the giants the Ammonites found when they took possession of this country, (^{<020>}Deuteronomy 2:20) or that was left when the Amorites took it from the Ammonites; and who having by some means or other ingratiated himself into their affections, because of his stature, strength, and courage, and other qualifications they might discern in him, made him their king:

behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: his body being so large and bulky, he might think it most proper and safest for him to have a bedstead

made of iron to lie upon, or to prevent noxious insects harbouring in it; nor was it unusual to have bedsteads made of other materials than wood, as of gold, silver, and ivory; (see Gill on “~~309~~ Amos 6:4”). Some learned men ^{f41} have been of opinion, that the beds of Typho in Syria, made mention of by Homer ^{f42}, refer to this bedstead of Og:

is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? which was the royal city of the Ammonites, in the times of David, (~~302~~ 2 Samuel 12:26), now called Philadelphia, as Jerom says ^{f43}. This bedstead might be either sent thither by Og, before the battle at Edrei, for safety, or rather might be sold by the Israelites to the inhabitants of Rabbath, who kept it, as a great curiosity:

nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man; a common cubit, so that it was four yards and a half long, and two yards broad. Onkelos renders it, after the king’s cubit; and the king’s cubit at Babylon, according to Herodotus ^{f44}, was larger by three fingers than the common one; such as the cubit in (~~305~~ Ezekiel 40:5), which was a cubit and an hand’s breadth; and this makes the dimensions of the bedstead yet larger. And by this judgment may be made of the tallness of Og’s stature, though this is not always a sure rule to go by; for Alexander, when in India, ordered his soldiers to make beds of five cubits long, to be left behind them, that they might be thought to be larger men than they were, as Diodorus Siculus ^{f45} and Curtius ^{f46} relate; but there is little reason to believe that Og’s bedstead was made with such a view. Maimonides observes ^{f47}, that a bed in common is a third part larger than a man; so that Og, according to this way of reckoning, was six cubits high, and his stature doubly larger than a common man’s; but less than a third part may well be allowed to a bed, which will make him taller still; the height of Og is reckoned by Wolfius ^{f48} to be about thirteen feet eleven inches of Paris measure.

Ver. 12. *And this land, which we possessed at that time,* etc.] Or took possession of, having conquered it; for it still remained in their possession:

from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon: on the borders of Moab, from thence as far as Gilead was the land which was taken from Sihon king of Heshbon, (~~312~~ Deuteronomy 2:36)

and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof: which were taken from Og king of Bashan, (~~310~~ Deuteronomy 3:10)

gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites; at their request, on certain conditions to be performed by them, afterwards repeated.

Ver. 13. *And the rest of Gilead*, etc.] The other half of the mount, with the cities belonging to it:

and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; (see ^{<0823>}Numbers 32:33)

all the region of Argob, with all Bashan; the region of Trachonitis, in Bashan; (see ^{<0804>}Deuteronomy 3:4),

which was called the land of giants; or of Rephaim; this Jarchi says is the country of the Rephaim given to Abraham, (^{<0150>}Genesis 15:20).

Ver. 14. *Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob*, etc.] Or Trachonitis; the small towns belonging to Gilead, as in (^{<0821>}Numbers 32:41)

unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; these were little kingdoms in Syria, on which the country of Argob bordered, and had kings over them in the time of David, and came not into the possession of the Israelites; (see ^{<0633>}Joshua 13:13 ^{<0082>}2 Samuel 3:3 10:6,8 15:8)

and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day; (see ^{<0821>}Numbers 32:41).

Ver. 15. *And I gave Gilead unto Machir*.] The son of Manasseh; not to him personally, who cannot be thought to have been living at this time, but to his posterity, to the Machirites; (see ^{<0820>}Numbers 32:40).

Ver. 16. *And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites*, etc.] The tribes of Reuben and Gad:

I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon: (see ^{<0802>}Deuteronomy 3:12)

half the valley and the border; or rather half the river, the river Arnon; and so it is rendered “the middle of the river”, in (^{<0612>}Joshua 12:2) and so here the middle of the torrent by the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, and by Onkelos:

even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; beyond which the land given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad reached not; (see ^{<0827>}Deuteronomy 2:37).

Ver. 17. *The plain also, and Jordan*, etc.] The plain by Jordan, the plains of Moab on the side of it, together with the river:

and the coast thereof; the country adjoining to it:

from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea; that is, from Gennesaret, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, called the land of Gennesaret, (^{<4043>}Matthew 14:34), from thence to the sea of Sodom, the sea of the plain, where the cities of the plain stood, Sodom, Gomorrah, etc. and the salt sea, so called from the salt and nitrous waters of it, the lake Asphaltites:

under Ashdotherpishgah eastward; mentioned among the cities given to the tribe of Reuben, (^{<4033>}Joshua 13:20) rendered “the springs of Pishgah”, (^{<4049>}Deuteronomy 4:49), the word having the signification of effusions, pourings out; so the Targums.

Ver. 18. *And I commanded you at that time*, etc.] Not all Israel, but the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; for what follows only concerns them:

saying, the Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it; the land before described, lately in the hands of Sihon and Og; this at their request Moses gave them, by the direction of the Lord, on the following condition:

you shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all [that] are meet for the war; that is, they should pass over Jordan with the rest of the tribes, being armed to assist them in the conquest of Canaan: for this phrase, which we render “before your brethren”, does not signify that they went in the forefront of them, only that they were present with them, and joined them in their war against their enemies; (see ^{<4029>}Numbers 32:29,30) and therefore should be rendered “with your brethren”^{f49}; even as many of them as were able to bear arms, at least as many as Joshua would choose to take of them; for he did not take them all by a great many; (see ^{<4043>}Joshua 4:13).

Ver. 19. *But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle*, etc.] These were to be left behind: for

I know that ye have much cattle; which made the countries of Gilead and Bashan, so famous for pasturage, agreeable to them; (see ^{<4030>}Numbers 32:1) these, under the care of servants, and also their wives and children,

shall abide in your cities which I have given you; and which they rebuilt and repaired, (^{<0623>}Numbers 32:34-42).

Ver. 20. *Until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you,* etc.] Rest from their enemies, and habitations to dwell quietly in; so the land of Canaan is called a rest, (^{<0619>}Deuteronomy 12:9) typical of the rest which remains for the people of God:

and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God hath given them beyond Jordan; for so Canaan was with respect to Moses and the people with him, who were then in the plains of Moab; otherwise the country in which he was with respect to Canaan is usually called beyond Jordan; this the Lord had given in promise to Israel, and they were just now ready to enter into and possess it, by virtue of his gift, and which made it sure unto them:

and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you; as accordingly they did, (^{<0621>}Joshua 22:1-34).

Ver. 21. *And I commanded Joshua at that time,* etc.] After the conquest of the two kings, and the assignment of their countries to the above tribes; and after Moses had it made known to him that he should quickly die, and Joshua should be his successor; then, by the direction of God, he gave him the following charge:

saying, thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings; Sihon and Og; how their kingdoms were taken from them, and given to Israel, and they slain with the sword; this Joshua was an eyewitness of, and was, no doubt, greatly concerned in the battles with them, being the general in the Israelitish armies; at least this was sometimes his post, and he cannot be thought to have been unemployed in these wars:

so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest; all the kingdoms in the land of Canaan, where there were many, thirty one at least; these would be all conquered and put into the hands of the Israelites, and their kings slain.

Ver. 22. *Ye shall not fear them,* etc.] On account of the numbers, strength, courage, and gigantic stature of the inhabitants, at least some of them; nor on account of their walled towns, and fortified cities:

for the Lord your God he shall fight for you; as he did, particularly at Jericho, the walls of which city fell at the sound of rams' horns; and at Gibeon, when he cast down hailstones on their enemies, and more were slain by them than with the sword; and in all their battles it was he that gave them success and victory.

Ver. 23. *And I besought the Lord at that time*, etc.] When he was told he should die, and Joshua should succeed him; or when the two kings were slain, and their kingdoms conquered; this being the beginning, pledge, and earnest of what God had promised to do for the people of Israel; Moses was very desirous of living to see the work completed, and therefore sought the Lord by prayer and supplication:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 24. *O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand*, etc.] To give a specimen of the greatness of his power in subduing the two kings and their kingdoms, and delivering them up into the hands of the Israelites. Moses had seen instances of the mighty power of God in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; but this was the beginning of his power, in vanquishing the Canaanites, and putting their land into the possession of the Israelites, as he had promised; of which the Amorites were a part, and a principal nation of them: and thus God, when he begins a work of grace upon the soul of man, begins to show the exceeding greatness of his power, and which is further exerted in carrying it on, and bringing it to perfection:

for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? here Moses speaks according to the notion of Heathens, who supposed there were other gods in heaven and in earth besides the true God; and upon this supposition observes, let there be as many as they will, or can be imagined, there is none of them like the Lord God of Israel for power and might; or are able to do such works as he has done, in nature, in the creation of all things out of nothing, in providence, in supporting what he has made, and in governing the world; and in those amazing instances of his power, in bringing down judgments upon wicked men, kings, and kingdoms; and in the deliverance of his own people from them, and putting them and their kingdoms into the possession of them; which were the wondrous works of might Moses had in view, and a sense of which was impressed on his mind at this time.

Ver. 25. *I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan*, etc.] The land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey; a land which he describes as a most excellent one, (^{<BR0>}Deuteronomy 8:7,8). To see this land, he was very desirous of going over the river Jordan, beyond which it lay with respect to the place where he now was:

that goodly mountain, and Lebanon; or, “that goodly mountain, even Lebanon”; which lay to the north of the land of Canaan, and was famous for cedar and odoriferous trees. But if two distinct mountains are meant, the goodly mountain may design Mount Moriah, on which the temple was afterwards built, and of which Moses might have a foresight; and some by Lebanon think that is meant, which was built of the cedars of Lebanon, and therefore goes by that name, (^{<310>}Zechariah 11:1) and a foreview of this made the mountain so precious to Moses, and desirable to be seen by him. So the Targum of Jonathan;

“that goodly mountain in which is built the city of Jerusalem, and Mount Lebanon, in which the Shechinah shall dwell”

to which agrees the note of Aben Ezra, who interprets the goodly mountain of Jerusalem, and Lebanon of the house of the sanctuary. In the Septuagint it is called Antilibanus. Mount Libanus had its name not from frankincense growing upon it, as some have thought; for it does not appear that any did grow upon it, for that came from Seba in Arabia Felix; but from the whiteness of it, through the continual snows that were on it, just as the Alps have their name for the same reason; and so Jerom says ^{f50} of Lebanon, that the snow never leaves from the tops of it, or is ever so overcome by the heat of the sun as wholly to melt; to the same purpose also Tacitus ^{f51} says, and Mr. Maundrell ^{f52}, who was there in May, speaks of deep snow on it, and represents the cedars as standing in snow.

Ver. 26. *But the Lord was wrath with me for your sakes*, etc.] Not at this time, and for this prayer of his, but on account of he and Aaron not sanctifying him at the waters of Meribah; or of some expressions of unbelief, and unadvised words, which dropped from his lips through their provocation of him; (see ^{<0012>}Numbers 20:12 ^{<0462>}Psalms 106:32,33)

and would not hear me; now, and grant the above request, having before declared that he and Aaron should not bring the people of Israel into the land he had given them; and Moses with all his entreaties could not prevail upon him to repeal the sentence:

and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice; that he had seen the conquest of the two kings, and the delivery of their kingdoms into the hands of Israel; and that he had brought the people through the wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan, and that he should have a distant sight of the land, as after directed:

speak no more unto me of this matter; intimating it would be in vain, and to no purpose, to solicit such a favour, since it would never be granted; it was a determined point, and he would never recede from it.

Ver. 27. *Get thee up into the top of Pisgah*, etc.] Which was the highest eminence of Mount Nebo, and so a very proper place to take a prospect from; (see ⁽¹²⁴⁾Deuteronomy 32:49 34:1)

and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward; to all the four points of the heaven, and to all the four quarters and borders of the land of Canaan:

and behold it with thine eyes; even the land of Canaan, and particularly Lebanon, though it lay to the north of it, that mountain he had such a desire to see. Moses, though old, his natural sight was very strong, and not in the least dim; and it is not improbable that it might be more than ordinarily increased and assisted at this time:

for thou shall not go over this Jordan; into the land of Canaan; this affair, of not being suffered to enter there, Moses frequently takes notice of, no less than four or five times, it being what lay near his heart.

Ver. 28. *But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him*, etc.] Charge him to take the care of the children of Israel, to introduce them into the good land, and put them into the possession of it; encourage him against all fear of his and their enemies, and strengthen him with promises of the presence of God, and of his gracious help and assistance:

for he shall go over before this people; over the river Jordan, at the head of them, as their leader and commander; a type of Christ, the leader and commander of his people, who as their King goes forth at the head of them, and will introduce them all into his Father's kingdom and glory:

and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see; and no more; not enter into, but Joshua should; and having conquered it, should divide it by lot for an inheritance to them, and their children after them; a

type of Christ, in whom and by whom the saints obtain an inheritance by lot, (~~401b~~Ephesians 1:11).

Ver. 29. *So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.*] In the plains of Moab, over against a temple built for Baalpeor upon a mountain, so called from that idol, or that idol from the mountain; this is the valley where Moses was buried, (~~634b~~Deuteronomy 34:6).