

The Book of Deuteronomy

Lesson 2: Victories East of the Jordan -- Deuteronomy 2:24-3:29

After forty years of waiting, the tide finally turns. For four decades Israel had been told no: no entering the land, no seizing Edom, no touching Moab or Ammon. Then God says a new word, a word that changes everything: Arise, set out, I have given Sihon and his land into your hand. Begin to take possession (2:24). You can almost feel the held breath of a generation finally hearing yes.

What follows is a string of stunning victories. Sihon king of Heshbon comes out to fight and is utterly defeated. Then Og king of Bashan, a giant whose iron bedstead was over thirteen feet long, meets the same end. These were not small enemies. They were exactly the kind of foe that had terrified the previous generation. And yet they fall, because God had said do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand (3:2).

This is the heartbeat of the passage: the Lord your God fights for you. The same truth Moses had pleaded at the border now plays out before their eyes. The conquest east of the Jordan becomes living proof that when God says go, the giants do not get the last word. He gives what He promises. The land is parceled out to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, a downpayment on the inheritance to come.

And then there is Moses. In one of the most tender and humbling moments of his life, he begs God to let him cross over and see the good land. God says no. He will not enter. Instead he is to climb Pisgah, view the land with his own eyes, and commission Joshua to lead the people in. Here is a man who accepts God's discipline without bitterness, who pours himself into preparing his successor, and who trusts that God's purposes are bigger than his own desires. There is more grace in Moses' surrender than there would have been in his crossing.

Group Discussion: God told Israel, and tells us through Joshua's commissioning, do not fear them, for the Lord your God is the one who fights for you. Where does the church most need to recover the confidence that the battle belongs to God, and how does that change the way we face opposition?

Personal Reflection: Moses accepted God's no with grace, climbed the mountain, looked at the land he would never enter, and turned to prepare the next leader. Where is God asking you to accept a no you did not want, and to invest in something you may never personally see completed?

Read Deuteronomy 2:24-3:29

Study Questions

1. From Deuteronomy 2:24–37, how is the defeat of Sihon described, and what does the account, including God hardening Sihon’s spirit, reveal about God’s sovereignty and His role in giving Israel the land?
2. Israel was commanded to begin to take possession and to contend with Sihon in battle (2:24). Where in your walk is God giving the victory yet still calling you to actually step out and act? What does faithful action look like for you?
3. In Deuteronomy 3:1–11, Og king of Bashan, a giant, is defeated. What does the fall of such a formidable enemy teach us about trusting God’s word, do not fear him, against intimidating obstacles?
4. Og was the kind of giant the previous generation feared. When you face something intimidating, how do you preach God’s promises to your own fearful heart? Describe how you do it, or how you could.
5. From Deuteronomy 3:12–20, how is the land distributed to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, and what is required of the fighting men of those tribes? What does this arrangement reveal about God’s order and shared responsibility among His people?
6. The eastern tribes received their inheritance but still had to cross over and fight for their brothers (3:18–20). Where might God be calling you to keep serving others even after your own needs are met? Where are you tempted to stop short?

7. In Deuteronomy 3:21–22, Moses charges Joshua: do not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you. What does this commissioning teach about godly leadership succession and the true source of a leader's confidence?
8. Joshua was strengthened by remembering what God had already done to the two kings (3:21). What past victories of God in your life can you rehearse to strengthen yourself for what lies ahead? Name a few.
9. Deuteronomy 3:23–29 records Moses pleading to cross over, God's firm refusal, and the instruction to view the land from Pisgah and commission Joshua. What does Moses' response to God's no teach about accepting divine discipline, submitting to God's larger purposes, and the difference between God's no and God's rejection?
10. Looking across the whole passage, the victories God gave, the inheritance distributed, the charge to Joshua, and Moses' gracious surrender, name one specific way Jesus is forming you to trust that the Lord fights for you and to accept His purposes even when they cost you something.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Joshua 1:1–9, where God commissions Joshua and commands him to be strong and courageous; Romans 8:31, if God is for us, who can be against us; Numbers 20:12, the reason Moses was barred from entering the land; 2 Timothy 4:6–8, Paul's gracious acceptance of the end of his course; Hebrews 11:13–16, the faithful sought a better, heavenly country.