

June 28

Scriptures: Read Deuteronomy 3

Key Verse: “You must not fear them, for the Lord your God Himself fights for you.”
(Deuteronomy 3:22)

Overview

After defeating Sihon, the Amorite king of Heshbon (2:32-33), Israel advanced toward the Jordan River in the area of Bathan where Og, king of Bathan, came out against Israel with defiance and force. God had already warned Israel of this conflict; He had encouraged Israel not to fear and promised to do the same with Og as He had done to Sihon (3:1-2). The Lord was faithful in delivering them into Israel’s hands (3:6; cf. Num.21:33-35). Even though Og was a huge and mighty warrior, he was not to be feared. No man’s power can secure him against the power of the Almighty. Moses mentioned Og’s great “iron bed” to illustrate that though he was indeed a giant (probably twice the height of an average man), the Lord had given Israel a great victory over him, and therefore there was no need to fear those large people in the land of Canaan as had their parents (cf. Num.13:28)

Moses also reminded Israel that Og (as well as Sihon: 2:36) had many large fortified cities with “high walls, gates, and bars”, but they as well as all the inhabitants, were “utterly destroyed” (3:5-6). With these words, Moses encouraged and challenged the new armed forces to go forth boldly into Canaan and conquer the giants and their cities just as God had done for them before.

With the fall of Sihon and Og, the vast territory on the east side of the Jordan River came into the hands of Israel. These victories were later often mentioned together to the praise of God, because with them Israel’s other triumphs began (e.g. Ps. 135:10-12). This newly conquered territory would give Israel great encouragement and would also give Moses a taste of the coming victories that he himself would not see. Moses was also able to see the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh receive their “rest” and inheritance as well (3:18-20). Moses used this opportunity to remind these tribes of this, their obligation.

God gave Moses a foretaste of the future before his death by seeing some receive their inheritance, and by seeing the Lord victorious in battle. Yet this was not sufficient; Moses strongly desired to enter the Promised Land himself to see more victories yet to come; this was his prayer. God was angered by would permit him to see the land from a distance. God’s solemn word does not change, as Moses should have known (Num.20:12; 27:14). It seems that Moses did not realize he would indeed soon see the manifestation of God and His glory in an even better way in the life hereafter than in remaining physically alive to enter Canaan. His exclusion would also serve as a lesson for all the people that there is a price to pay for disobedience to God.

Moses’ final duties, besides the covenant renewal ceremony (29:10-15), were to challenge the people not to fear, but to conquer, for “God Himself fights for you” (3:22). He would also commission and encourage Joshua to lead them in the conquest (3:21, 28; Num.27:28-23). Joshua may have been reluctant to take such a great responsibility, so Moses was to encourage him and give him support. Joshua was also assured that he was God’s choice and that God would

fight for him. When God chooses someone for His work, He sends others to encourage and give support. Moses importantly, He Himself will give the greatest support.

For those believers who are close to passing on into glory, it must be a comfort to know that he Lord will see that their work in furthering His kingdom is carried on, just as it must have been a comfort for Moses. Although he was not allowed to march into Canaan, Moses must have been satisfied that God's will and purpose would still be accomplished. The torch was now to be passed on to another: his task had been accomplished.

Prayer

O Lord, grant us a more perfect love for You, for Your Word declares, "Perfect love casts out fear." Thus, emboldened by our love for You, we will march forward in Your plan for our lives until that time when, by Your grace, we hear You say, "Well done."