

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Moshe Remembers the Conquest of Og

3: 1-11

Moshe Remembers the conquest of Og DIG: What happens en route to Bashan that is like and unlike what happened with King Sihon of Heshbon (2:24-35)? How does the conquest of Bashan begin to fulfill God's promise in 2:25? What makes the defeat of Og such a powerful victory? Where was Og's territory located? What do these two conquests reveal about how God prepared the Israelites for the conquest of the Promised Land? What is the *cherem* judgment of ADONAI?

REFLECT: Knowing God's Word and obeying God's Word are two different things. Paul said it this way, "For what I do not want, this I practice; but what I hate, this I do" (Romans 7:15b). How are you doing with this life-long struggle? Where do you see God at work right now in your life? What might "the Promised Land" look like in that context? What about your relationship with ADONAI continues to amaze you? How can it affect your sleep tonight?

Isra'el's conquest of the kingdoms that controlled the territory of the Transjordan continued with their victory over Og of Bashan.



The account of the victory over **Sihon's** kingdom is followed by a description of the next military success of **the Israelites**, this time over **Og, king of Bashan**. **Next**

we turned and went up the way to the Bashan (Deuteronomy 3:1a; Numbers 21:33a). Bashan was the area north and north-east of Galilee, and according to the prophet **Amos**, it was famous for **its** abundance and rich pastureland (**Amos 4:1**).

King Og of the Bashan came out against us - he and all his people - for battle at Edrei. But ADONAI said to me: Do not fear him, for I have handed him over and all his people and his land. You will do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon (Deuteronomy 3:1b-2; Numbers 33b-34). As an **Amorite king, Og** and **his people** were subject to the same fate as **Sihon** and **the Amorites** under **his** control . . . *total destruction (to see link click [Ag](#) - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh)*. As with **Sihon**, **YHVH** determined the outcome of the battle but required that **Isra'el** trust **His** promises and conquer **the Bashanites**.⁸⁴

In the concise nature of the account, the entire battle is virtually reduced to this one verse: **So, ADONAI our God also handed over King Og of the Bashan and all his people. We struck him and his sons down with his entire army until no survivor was left** because **Ha'Shem** had declared **them** *cherem*, or *devoted to destruction (Deuteronomy 3:3; Numbers 21:35)*. The conquest took **the Israelites** slightly off **their** route, in that **Bashan** lay considerably north of the point at which **they** would cross **the Jordan** River for the occupation of western Palestine. From a military point of view, however, the conquest of **Bashan** was wise, for it meant that the right flank of **the Israelites** would be protected when **they** prepared to cross **the Jordan** for the main assault.⁸⁵

The *cherem* judgment in **Deuteronomy** and elsewhere in the TaNaKh (**Numbers 31:15-17; Deuteronomy 3:6-7, 7:2, 20:17, 26:16-17; Joshua 10:11 and 11:12; Judges 21:11; First Samuel 15:3 and 27:9-11; Jeremiah 25:9**), were seen as wars waged as part of a Holy War at the command of **ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot: the LORD God of heaven's angelic armies**. However, a careful reading of the conquests of **Joshua** suggests that it was not completely carried out, since **the Canaanites** remained alongside **Isra'el** in **the Land (Joshua 15:63 and 16:10)**. **Isra'el's** failure to fulfill the *cherem* judgment on **the Canaanites** during the conquest of **the Promised Land** does not reflect **YHVH's** inability . . . but human unwillingness. Later in **Deuteronomy**, the command to **strike them down and utterly destroy them (7:22a)**, is followed by commands not to make treaties or intermarry with **them (7:22b-3)**.⁸⁶ It was as if **the LORD** knew the

weakness of **His people** and, in **His** grace, tried to give **them** further direction to keep **them** from sinning. But alas, **His** wisdom fell on deaf ears, and **the Isrealites** did eventually intermarry with them and, surprise-surprise, fell into sin.

Currently, however, the *cherem* judgment was fully executed (pun intended) as **no survivors** were **left**, and by defeating **Og, Isra'el** controlled the entire Transjordan from **Mo'ab** to the heights of **Bashan** in the vicinity of **Mount Hermon**. The victories over **Sihon** and **Og** eventually became the subject of a song (**Psalm 135:11, 136:19-20**) and is now a regular part of the commemoration of the works of **the LORD** in the celebration of Pesach (see the commentary on **Leviticus Dy - Pesach**).⁸⁷

We captured all his cities at that time - there was not a town that we did not take from them - sixty cities, the whole region of Argob (another name for Bashan), the kingdom of Og in the Bashan. All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates and bars, in addition to a great many unwalled towns. We utterly destroyed them, just as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every city - men, women and children. But all the livestock and the spoils of the cities we took as plunder for ourselves (3:4-7). It was as if **Moses** was saying to the next generation, "The cities in the Transjordan were **walled high with gates and bars**. But look, **Ha'Shem** gave us the victory here, and **He** will give us the victory over those types of **cities** in Canaan once we cross **the Jordan**."

A parenthetical note: So, at that time we took from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land across the Jordan, from the Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon. This verse summarizes the conquest of the territory controlled by **Sihon** and **Og**, two Transjordan **Amorite kings**. The repetitive statements have to be seen in the context of the address of **Moshe**, where the emphasis and repetition serve to hammer home to the listeners the truth of the faithfulness of **ADONAI**. **The Sidonians, descendants of Zidon, Canaan's firstborn son, the original owners of the mountain called Hermon** (from *cherem*, meaning *devoted to destruction*, or *banned*, was given to the mountain because of its 9,200-foot altitude and its bleak, unapproachable character) **Sirion, while the Amorites, who were then in possession of it called it Senir, meaning snow in their language.** Mount **Hermon** was a natural physical barrier to the north of **Bashan**. **We took all the cities of the plain and all the Gilead and all the Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in the Bashan (3:8-10).**

Though it is impossible to determine precisely when **verses 8-11** were inserted, **2:12b** indicates that it was after the initial conquest of **the Land**. Editorial notes in the Pentateuch do no harm to the doctrine of biblical inspiration. Inspiration refers to the final product rather than to the manner of writings. The original texts of Scripture are **God-breathed (Second Timothy 3:16)**, and therefore contain no errors, for **God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)**. **The Ruach Ha-Kodesh** superintended the work of editors just as **He** did the historical research of **Luke (Luke 1:1-4)** so that the final words of the text, though obtained by different methods, are the words intended by **ADONAI**. It was this final text (including editorial insertions) that **Yeshua Messiah** pronounced to be perfect (**Matthew 5:18; John 10:35**).⁸⁸

Another parenthetical note: An interesting detail is seen here about **Og**. **For only King Og of the Bashan survived from the remnant of the Rephaim. All the Bashan is called the land of Rephaim (3:13). Although Og reigned over the Amorites and was called the king of the Amorites, he himself belonged to the giant-like people Rephaim, as was Goliath, and was their last survivor. In fact, his coffin (literally resting place, referencing the deceased) was made of iron - is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length and four cubits its width (thirteen-and-a-half feet long and six feet wide), according to the cubit of a man. (3:11). The cubit** is derived directly from the Latin *cubitus*, meaning *the lower arm*. The Hebrew word is *ammah*, meaning *the mother of the arm*, that is, *the forearm*. It is evidently a measure taken from the human body; as were other measurements of length among the Hebrews and other nations. There seemed to be two kinds of **cubits**. Here we read of **the cubit of a man**. In **Ezeki'el 40:5** we read of **a normal cubit and a handbreadth**. Both are difficult to determine the exact length. Various estimates of **the Mosaic cubit** have been given, varying from twelve to twenty-two inches. **The Jews** did not use the cubit of twenty-one inches, which was the Babylonian cubit, until after the captivity (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**).⁸⁹ Ironically, the monument to the hero **king's** memory became an eloquent witness to the power of **Ha'Shem** over all such giants.

The children of **Isra'el** were finally becoming victorious in battle. These are some important lessons we can learn concerning successful warfare from **Deuteronomy 2:16-3:11**.

1. Our spiritual battles are to be a cooperative effort with God. The formula is simple: **ADONAI our God gave [Sihon] over to us . . . and we struck him down along with his sons and all his people (2:33)**. So, **ADONAI our God**

also handed over Og of the Bashan and all his people . . . and we struck him down until no survivor was left (3:3). For example, Paul encourages us in our spiritual battle with temptation by saying: **No temptation has taken hold of you except what is common to mankind. But God is faithful - He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can handle. But with the temptation, He will also provide a way of escape, so you will be able to endure it (First Corinthians 10:13).**

2. God's initial action should be followed with prompt obedience. ADONAI said to me, "See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you - **begin to take possession in order to take hold of his land (2:31).** When we know that **God** has given us marching orders, **He** expects us to follow them immediately. Remember, delayed obedience is disobedience.

3. ADONAI chooses the weak to accomplish great things. Now when all the men of war had finished dying from among the people, that the Israelites engaged in war. In order to demonstrate His supreme power, Ha'Shem had to eliminate anything that could give His people a false sense of security. Therefore, the temptation to trust the generation of the Exodus and their military ideas needed to be removed first. Paul also teaches us this same concept from the B'rit Chadashah. For you see your calling, brothers and sisters, that not many are wise according to human standards, not many are powerful, and not many are born well. Yet God chose the foolish things of the world so He might put to shame the wise; and God chose the weak things of the world so He might put to shame the strong; and God chose the lowly and despised things of the world, the things that are as nothing, so He might bring to nothing the things that are - so that no human might boast before God. But because of Him you are in Messiah Yeshua, who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and holiness and redemption - so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in ADONAI." When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with excellence of speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God. For I decided not to know about anything among you except Yeshua the Messiah - and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power - so that your faith would not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (First Corinthians 1:26-2:5).

4. One success encourages another. Regarding the fate of **Og**, **YHVH** said: **You will do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon (3:2). And we utterly destroyed them, just as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon (3:6).** God was creating a winning atmosphere to prepare **His people** for **their** most important battle, the crossing of **the Jordan**. Another example of this is **David's** confidence when explaining to **King Sha'ul** why **he** was willing to face **Goliath**. **David said to Sha'ul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."** Then **Sha'ul** said to **David**, **"You can't go fight this Philistine - for you're just a youth, and he's been a warrior since his youth."** But **David** said to **Sha'ul**, **"Your servant has been tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb out of its mouth. If it rose up against me, I grabbed him by its fur, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear, so this uncircumcised Philistine will become like one of them - since he has defied the ranks of the living God."** Then **David** said, **"ADONAI, who has delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."** **"Go!"** said **Saul** to **David**, **"and may ADONAI be with you"** (First Samuel 1:26-2:5).

5. The art of war is not as important as the art of faith. The experience of the generation of the Exodus had not produced victory, but only fear. The inexperience in warfare of a new generation that had faith in **YHVH** produced victory! All human efforts become worthless if they are not grounded upon faith in **the LORD**.⁹⁰

*Dear Great **Father**, We worship **You!** We praise **You** that the outcome of battles is not in our strength or ability- but in **Your** mighty, omnipotent hands! How awesome that no power, no matter how mighty it is, can stand up against **You**. For at the end of the 7 years of Tribulation Satan in anger gathers the nations against **You**. **Also, I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the One who sat on the horse and against His army. (Revelation 19:19).***

*No battle is needed, for **You** strike them down with the sword from **Your** mouth. **From His mouth comes a sharp sword - so that with it He may strike down the nations - and He shall rule them with an iron rod, and He treads the winepress of the furious wrath of Elohei-Tzva'ot. (Revelation 19:15).***



*Trusting **You** brings peace, even in the midst of awful times of pandemics. **You** are in control! We lovingly bow in worship of **You**, our great, mighty and wonderful **Daddy**. In the holy name of **Your Son** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*