

- I. Verses 24-25: set out
  - II. Verses 26- 31: Message to Sihon, the king of Heshbon; message rejected
  - III. Verses 32- 37: The people of Israel conquer Heshbon
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- I. Verses 24-25: set out
    - a. Deut 2: 24-25: *'Arise, set out, and pass through the valley of Arnon. Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand; begin to take possession and contend with him in battle.<sup>25</sup> This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.'*
    - b. Remember we are picking up from their travels in the previous section.
    - c. In the beginning of chapter 2 they were traveling through locations but told to leave the descendants of Lot and Esau alone.
    - d. The ESV Study Bible gives a really good note about Sihon the Amorite: *See note on Deut. 1:3–4. According to Gen. 15:16, the land would be given to Israel when the iniquity of the Amorites was complete, and now that time has come. Thus the defeat of various nations represents God's punishment for their iniquity (Deut. 18:12). (See Introduction to Joshua: The Destruction of the Canaanites.) In holy war, enemies tremble before the Lord (Ex. 15:14; see also Josh. 4:24–5:1).*
    - e. This is recorded in Num 21:13, 14 and recounted in Judg 11:18
    - f. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: *This battle is initially recorded in Numbers 21. Sihon is known only from the biblical records, and archaeology has little information to offer regarding his capital city or his kingdom.<sup>1</sup>*
    - g. The Archaeological Study Bible shares: *God's prohibition against Israel's disturbing the Edomites, Moabites or Ammonites did not extend to the Amorites. In this instance God allowed the Israelites to take plunder. Later he would, in certain situations, demand total destruction (cf. the stories of Achan in Jos 7 and Saul in 1Sa 15; see also "Herem Holy War"). We know from other Old Testament sources that such destruction was generally the result of long-delayed judgment. The detestable idolatrous practices of these hostile peoples included religious prostitution and human sacrifice — sometimes even of their own children (see "Human Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East").*
    - h. They are to pass through the Valley of Arnon or the wadi of Arnon.
    - i. God is giving Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon **and his land** into their hand.
    - j. God tells them to begin to take possession and contend with him in battle.

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Dt 2:26.

- k. As we look at the next section we will see that the Israelites do offer to be peaceful first.
- l. Verse 25: this idea is listed in verse 4. In verse 4 the Scripture talks about the people being afraid of them. Also: Ex 23:27; Deut 11:25; Josh 2:9<sup>2</sup>
- m. Notice the complete fear: The “dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens.” This will happen:
  - i. When they hear the reports of you...
  - ii. They will be in anguish because of you.
- n. We know that all this happened because of the Lord.
- II. Verses 26- 31: Message to Sihon, the king of Heshbon; message rejected
  - a. <sup>26</sup> “So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, <sup>27</sup> ‘Let me pass through your land, I will travel only on the highway; I will not turn aside to the right or to the left. <sup>28</sup> You will sell me food for money so that I may eat, and give me water for money so that I may drink, only let me pass through on foot, <sup>29</sup> just as the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I cross over the Jordan into the land which the Lord our God is giving to us.’ <sup>30</sup> But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the Lord your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today. <sup>31</sup> The Lord said to me, ‘See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to occupy, that you may possess his land.’
  - b. Moses sends messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace...
  - c. The message is similar to the message to the descendants of Esau and Lot.
  - d. This is in Numbers 21:21-32
  - e. This is recounted in: Deut 1:4; Judg 11:19–21
  - f. Verses 27-29 records the message.
    - i. They want to pass through and stay on the highway.
    - ii. They won’t get off of the route.
    - iii. Verse 28: sell food and they will pay for it.
    - iv. Sell water and they will pay for it.
    - v. Think about this a little. The Israelites were a large group and therefore there would be major economic significance to this. It would make sense for Sihon to be concerned, but it would also make sense for Sihon to think about the financial gain of selling food and water to them.
    - vi. Verse 29 just as the sons of Esau and the Moabites did for us.
    - vii. Verse 30: Sihon, king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through the land.
      - 1. The Lord hardened his heart.
      - 2. This happened in order to deliver him into your hand.
      - 3. Where he is to this day.
    - viii. Verse 31:
      - 1. The Lord delivered Sihon.
      - 2. And his land

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<sup>2</sup> [\*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update\*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

3. Over to the Hebrew people.
  4. Begin to occupy that you may possess his land.
- III. Verses 32- 37: The people of Israel conquer Heshbon
- a. <sup>32</sup> “Then Sihon with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz. <sup>33</sup> The Lord our God delivered him over to us, and we defeated him with his sons and all his people. <sup>34</sup> So we captured all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed the men, women and children of every city. We left no survivor. <sup>35</sup> We took only the animals as our booty and the spoil of the cities which we had captured. <sup>36</sup> From Aroer which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon and from the city which is in the valley, even to Gilead, there was no city that was too high for us; the Lord our God delivered all over to us. <sup>37</sup> Only you did not go near to the land of the sons of Ammon, all along the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, and wherever the Lord our God had commanded us.
  - b. **The Moody Bible Commentary shares: *The Amorites were not related to the Israelites like the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and there is no statement that the Amorites were given a possession of land by the Lord as these others were (Dt 2:5, 9, 19). In fact the Lord clearly stated that He is the one who would deliver Sihon and his land over to the Israelites as a possession (v. 31).***<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Verse 32 is when Sihon comes to meet them in the battle at Jahaz.
  - d. Take note that verse 31 says the Lord had begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to them, though verse 32 is when the battle actually begins.
  - e. Verse 33, notice the detail:
    - i. The Lord defeated Sihon
    - ii. The Lord defeated his sons.
    - iii. The Lord defeated all of his people.
  - f. Verse 34 gives more detail:
    - i. Captured all of his cities
    - ii. Utterly destroyed all the men, women and children of every city.
    - iii. Utterly: this has the idea of “complete” destruction.
    - iv. It could also say “put under the ban” however based on previous commands to kill all of the men, women and children it seems that complete destruction is what is referenced.
    - v. “we left no survivor.”
  - g. Verse 35 adds more:
    - i. They took animals as booty.
    - ii. The spoils
  - h. Verse 36:
    - i. More emphasis on the cities captured
    - ii. Note: “The Lord our God delivered all over to us.”
    - iii. Emphasis on victory with the Lord.
  - i. The Moody Bible Commentary shares: *The phrase utterly destroyed (Hb. charam, v. 34) invokes “holy war” terminology and is used several times in the book (3:6; 7:2; 13:16; 20:17). All the Amorite territory from Aroer in the south to Gilead in the north was now under Israelite control. The clause there was no city that was too high for us*

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<sup>3</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 10299-10301). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- (v. 36) referred to their city walls. This was a rebuke to the earlier notion that Israel would not be able to conquer the Canaanites because their walls were “fortified to heaven” (1:28). Israel was obedient in that they did not encroach on Ammonite territory (related to Israel via Lot, Gn 19) and went only wherever the Lord commanded them.<sup>4</sup>
- j. The NIV Zondervan Study Bible shares about “completely destroyed” *This is the first practice of the “ban” in Deuteronomy, an important ritual in holy war in the ancient world. The defiled enemy had to be removed from the human world and transferred to the divine world. The victors renounced all claim on the enemy. Destruction of people and things made them useless to the conquerors but put them in the hands of God. So the Hebrew term is sometimes translated “destroyed” and sometimes “devoted” (Num 18: 14; Josh 6: 17). If the ban was total (see 1 Sam 15: 3), all the possessions of the enemy were confiscated and destroyed, but items of precious metal were purged with fire (Num 31: 22– 23) and removed to a special zone for use by God (Josh 6: 24). Sometimes the ban was restricted to combatants, as in this case. In similar military contexts Deuteronomy sometimes speaks of nations being driven out instead of being destroyed, which suggests that the ban applied to those fighting against Israel rather than those who fled (9: 3; 11: 23; 18: 12).*<sup>5</sup>
- k. The Reformation Study Bible shares: *The cities were put under the ban (i.e., Israel left no survivors, v. 34; Lev. 27: 28 note). The calculated effect of the ban in ancient times was to make the inhabitants of an area flee without putting up resistance. Israel was commanded not to use this procedure except in their conquest of Canaan and Transjordan (20: 10– 15), where the holy nation would be corrupted by the influence of the remaining pagan culture (Ps. 106: 34– 39). The name of the city of Jahaz is found on the Moabite Stone from the ninth century B.C. Mesha, king of Moab, relates how he captured the city from the Israelites.*<sup>6</sup>
- l. The Apologetics Study Bible shares: *The complete destruction of men, women, and children underscores the idea of corporate solidarity. All members of a community, or even of a family, are blessed or judged together (Nm 16:1–35; Jos 7:22–26). Yet, within that framework, each individual is ultimately responsible to God for his or her own destiny (Jr 31:29–30; Ezk 18:2, 4). Moreover, were these nations to survive, Israel would be drawn away into idolatry (Dt 7:1–4).*<sup>7</sup>
- m. Verse 37 is confirming that they did not go where the Lord commanded them to stay away from.

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<sup>4</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 10304-10309). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Zondervan. The NIV Zondervan Study Bible, eBook: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message (Kindle Locations 46675-46680). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

<sup>6</sup> Various. Reformation Study Bible (2015) ESV (Kindle Locations 18032-18036). . Kindle Edition.

<sup>7</sup> Ted Cabal et al., [\*The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 271.