

In the Land Where Giants Fell – *Deuteronomy 2:1-23*

Introduction – Moses is preparing the next generation to enter into a land of giants, mighty men who had frightened the previous generation from their potential conquest (Num 13:31-33). There are so many references to giants (Nephilim, Rephaim, Anakim, the Amorites, and others) and we're not talking about NBA size men. Og's bedstead is near 13 feet long for a reason (more on him later). They were not metaphorically giants; they were giants.

But the residents of Canaan were not the only giants and God took Israel on a field trip. There was something He wished them to learn as they travelled through the lands of their cousins. *"...by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established"* (Deut 19:15). Moses reminds them of what they had seen.

Through the Land of Brother Edom (vv1-7) – Near the end of the forty years, Yahweh commands Israel to go north through the land that He had given to Esau. While Edom had heard of Israel's power over Egypt and feared them, Israel is not to meddle with Edom (vv4-5). God had provided for Israel with the spoils of Egypt and they had all they needed to buy food and water from Edom (v6). In fact, these forty years wandering had been great proof of God's provision and care for His people (v7, also Deut 8:1-5, Acts 7:36).

Through the Land of Cousin Moab (vv8-12) – Continuing on in their journey, Israel is told not to harass the Moabites either. They were descendants of the incestuous relationship of Lot (Gen 19:37), but God had given them this land even though it had been inhabited by multiple giants.

The Valley of the Zered (vv13-15) – In contrast to these land-conquering cousins, Moses reminds the people that they are wandering as they wait for the "men of war" (note the sarcasm) to "be consumed." It is not simply that they were dying of old age, but that Yahweh was destroying them for their unbelief (Jude 5).

Through the Land of Cousin Ammon (vv16-23) – For a third lesson and witness, Israel passes through a land God had given to the Ammonites, another descendant of Lot. And the lesson is hammered home. This land was called a land of giants (Rephaim – v20). The Ammonites had defeated the Zamzummim (v20), Edom had taken the Horites (v22), and other miscellaneous giants were put down – the Avim and Caphtorim (v23).

Giants, Promises, and Faith – Think of what Israel witnessed before her eyes. Even though these other nations did not have the kind of relationship with Yahweh that Israel had, He had promised and given them certain possessions – due to their more distant relationship to Abraham. But Yahweh had singled out Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a special people. Abraham's descendents were dying in the wilderness because they did not believe and therefore did not obey Yahweh. The problem was not giants in the land – God didn't have a problem with giants. The problem was faith.

Care and Discipline (v7) – In this verse and in this whole section of Israel's life we see the care and discipline of a loving Father. This discipline is hard and painful, but it is yielding the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:3-11). For there will be days ahead for fighting giants.

Fighting Giants – This is a motif that runs throughout the Scripture; in fact it is central to the story of God and the second Adam. Eve was promised that through her seed, the seed of the serpent would be put down. The story of David and Goliath is well known by all and is a type for the church conquering the world. The odds makers would have their money on Goliath; carnal eyes see only the impossibility of the situation. Eyes of faith see the LORD of battles (1 Sam 17:45-47). But there are always more giants to fight (2 Sam 21:19-22).

The Son of David and the Strongman – Jesus Christ was not a godly giant who defeated a puny devil. He was the Son of David who bound and defeated the Goliaths of that age (Luke 11:21-22, Col 2:15). Having bound the strongman, Jesus then took his treasures, his kingdoms, and made them His – because His Father had promised just this to the Son and Jesus believed.

There are Metaphorical Giants – Of course there is personal application in this story as well as application for the church today. What does God think of the giants in your life – those lusts, those circumstances, those troubles and impossibilities? Go on field trip: what did He do for Edom, for Moab, for Ammon? Why would He not do it for us? The same reason He did not do it for Israel – lack of faith. Who overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5)?

The Weapons of our Faith – David picked up five stones. What will the church use to conquer the world of giants? We fight giants with preaching, singing, with water, with bread and wine. We fight with faith and this will be the story of the world – the story of giant-killing.