

Deuteronomy 4:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt:

Analysis

On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites...

Moses anchors the law's promulgation in specific geography: be'ever haYarden (בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן, 'beyond the Jordan') in the valley (בָּגַי, bagay) opposite Beth-peor. The name Beit Pe'or (בֵּית פְּעוֹר, 'house of Peor') recalls Israel's shameful apostasy at Baal-peor where they joined in Moabite idolatry (Numbers 25). Moses speaks where Israel sinned, making covenant renewal intensely relevant.

The land identification as erets Sichon melek ha'Emori (אֶרֶץ סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָעַמּוֹרִי, 'land of Sihon king of the Amorites') reminds Israel of recent conquest. Where Sihon once ruled, Israel now gathers. His capital Heshbon (חֶשְׁבוֹן, Cheshbon) has fallen. The defeated king becomes a testimony to God's power and faithfulness.

This geographical specificity serves theological purpose. Biblical revelation is not timeless mythology but historically rooted truth. The law was given at a real place, to real people, in real circumstances. Christianity inherits this incarnational approach to truth—God works through actual history, not abstract philosophy. The specific details invite verification: 'Go see where these things happened; the evidence remains.'

Historical Context

Moses specifies the geographical location of his address: the plains of Moab in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in territory taken from Sihon king of the Amorites. This recent military victory (Deuteronomy 2:26-37) occurred just before Moses' final speeches, demonstrating God's faithfulness in giving Israel the land east of Jordan as prelude to Canaan proper.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What significance is there in Moses giving covenant instruction at the very location where Israel had previously sinned at Baal-peor?
2. How does the historical and geographical specificity of Scripture strengthen your confidence in its reliability?

Interlinear Text

בְּעַבְרָה	הַיַּרְדֵּי	בִּגְיָא	מֵעַל	בְּיַת	פְּעוֹר	בְּאֶרֶץ
On this side	Jordan	in the valley	over against	^{H0}	Bethpeor	in the land
H5676	H3383	H1516	H4136		H1047	H776
סִיחֹן	מֶלֶךְ	הָאֱמֹרִי	אֲשֶׁר	יָשָׁב	בְּחֶשְׁבֹן	אֲשֶׁר
of Sihon	king	of the Amorites	^{H834}	who dwelt	at Heshbon	^{H834}
H5511	H4428	H567		H3427	H2809	
הִכָּה	מֹשֶׁה	וּבְנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּצֵאתָם		
smote	whom Moses	and the children	of Israel	after they were come forth		
H5221	H4872	H1121	H3478	H3318		
מִמִּצְרַיִם:						
out of Egypt						
H4714						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 3:29 (Parallel theme): So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.