

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 (bagay, בְּגַיָּה) opposite Beth-peor. The name Beit Pe'or (בֵּית פֵּעֹור, '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 melekh ha'Emori (ארץ סיחון מלך האמוראים), 'land of Sihon king of the Amorites') reminds Israel of recent conquest. Where Sihon once ruled, Israel now gathers. His capital Heshbon (חִשְׁבּוֹן) 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

Psalm 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

בְּאַרְצָה פָּעַל וּבְבָרָא
On this side Jordan in the valley over against Bethpeor in the land
H5676 H3383 H1516 H4136 H0 H1047 H776

אֲשֶׁר בְּחִשְׁבָּן יָשַׁב אֲשֶׁר
of Sihon king of the Amorites who dwelt at Heshbon
H5511 H4428 H567 H834 H3427 H2809 H834

בְּצִאתָם מִשְׁבָּא לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
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 Bethpeor.

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