

Deuteronomy 4:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon,

Analysis

From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon.

Moses traces the north-south extent of conquered territory. Me'Aro'er (מֵעַרְעֵר) in the south, perched on the Arnon gorge's edge, marked the boundary with Moab. Har Si'on (הר שִׁׁיאָן, 'Mount Sion/Sirion')—identified as Hermon—towers in the north, its snow-capped peak visible for miles. The territory spans approximately 150 miles, from desert canyon to alpine summit.

The alternative name 'Sion' (Si'on) for Hermon demonstrates the mountain's importance to surrounding peoples—it bore different names in different cultures (cf. Deuteronomy 3:9). The Sidonians called it Sirion; the Amorites called it Senir. Moses here uses yet another name, showing the mountain's widespread recognition as a landmark and boundary marker.

Geographical boundaries matter. They define what belongs to whom, what falls under what jurisdiction, what has been conquered and secured. Israel's inheritance had measurable extent—not vague spiritual promise but land that could be surveyed and mapped. God's promises are concrete, not ethereal. The same specificity characterizes Christian hope: a new heavens and new earth, the resurrection of the body, the New Jerusalem with measured dimensions (Revelation 21). Biblical faith concerns actual reality, not mere religious sentiment.

Historical Context

Moses defines the southern and northern boundaries of the conquered trans-Jordan territory: from Aroer on the Arnon River to Mount Hermon. This geographical precision established the extent of the promised land's eastern portion, serving as earnest for the greater inheritance awaiting across the Jordan in Canaan.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the concrete, measurable nature of Israel's inheritance inform your understanding of Christian hope for the new creation?
2. What does it mean that God's promises have specific, definable content rather than being vague spiritual aspirations?

Interlinear Text

רַקְמֹן	וְאֵין	שֵׁיאָן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	שְׁפָת	עַל	אֶשְׁר	מִצְרָעָר	רַקְמֹן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	אַרְנוֹן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	יְהֻדָּה
From Aroer	H834	H5921	which is by the bank	of the river	Arnon	H5704						
H6177			H8193	H5158	H769							

רַקְמֹן:	וְאֵין	שֵׁיאָן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	שְׁפָת	עַל	אֶשְׁר	מִצְרָעָר	רַקְמֹן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	אַרְנוֹן	בְּרַקְמֹן:	יְהֻדָּה
even unto mount	Sion	H1931	which is Hermon									
H2022	H7865		H2768									

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 3:9 (Parallel theme): (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;)

Deuteronomy 2:36 (Parallel theme): From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us:

Psalms 133:3 (Parallel theme): As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Deuteronomy 3:12 (Parallel theme): And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

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