

12.32 Victory at Hormah; Going Around Edom (Numbers 33:35–37, 40; 21:1–3; Deuteronomy 2:1–23)

(The teacher might combine this story with “12.31 No Passage Through Edom; Aaron’s Death” and/or “12.33 The Bronze Serpent.”)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials.
- Nancy Ganz’s treatment of this story is excellent in *Numbers: A Commentary for Children*, published by Shepherd Press, 2006. Ideas or quotes from this source will be noted by (Ganz).

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *to devote to destruction:* to destroy utterly both people and their cities
- [See the chart below of terms for giants in the land.]

Scripture: (ESV)

Numbers 33:35 And they set out from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber. 36 And they set out from Ezion-geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh). 37 And they set out from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the edge of the land of Edom. . . . 40 And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the people of Israel.

21:1 When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive. 2 And Israel vowed a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.” 3 And the Lord heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called Hormah.

Deuteronomy 2:1 “Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea, as the LORD told me. And for many days we traveled around Mount Seir. 2 Then the LORD said to me, 3 ‘You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward 4 and command the people, You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful. 5 Do not contend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. 6 You shall purchase food from them with money, that you may eat, and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink. 7 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.’ 8 So we went on, away from our brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road from Elath and Ezion-geber.

“And we turned and went in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. 9 And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the people of Lot for a possession.’ 10 (The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim. 11 Like the Anakim they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. 12 The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the people of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.) 13 ‘Now rise up and go over the brook Zered.’ So we went over the brook Zered. 14 And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. 15 For indeed the hand of

the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp, until they had perished.

16 “So as soon as all the men of war had perished and were dead from among the people, 17 the LORD said to me, 18 ‘Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar. 19 And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.’ 20 (It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim— 21 a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, and they dispossessed them and settled in their place, 22 as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. 23 As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, and the Caphtorium, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.)

Introduction/Review:

Let’s go back to the book of Genesis again. This time we will revisit Abraham’s nephew, Lot. This man had two sons named Moab and Ammon. They and their descendants settled in lands named for them east and southeast of Canaan. [Locate on map.] Esau’s descendants inhabited the kingdom called Edom.

Story:

Giants

Deuteronomy 2 gives us quite a bit of background regarding the inhabitants of various areas in and around Canaan. [Refer to chart found below.] The spies had considered themselves to be as grasshoppers in the sight of these peoples. Although this statement was an exaggeration, one can understand the spies’ viewpoint, for these people were truly giants. The predecessors of these immense men, feared and renowned, were people called Anakim or Rephaim, but each territory gave them a new name:¹ The Moabites called them Emmim. The Ammonites called them Zamzummim.² Edom called them Horim. The Philistines called them Avim.

Since the spies’ bad report, the consequential forty years of wandering with no purpose except to await the deaths of Israelite adults was nearing completion. Surely, the nations of Canaan were beginning to get nervous about this great horde so close to them and whom they knew intended to conquer them.

Battle

When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb desert of southern Canaan, heard that Israel was coming, he put feet to his fears and fought against Israel. Apparently, he was at least partially successful, for he took some Israelite captives.

Israel would not tolerate that defeat, so they made a vow to the Lord, promising, “If you let us beat these people in battle, then we will devote their cities to destruction.”

Destruction

The Lord heard and answered this vow by giving Israel victory over those Canaanites. Therefore, Israel fulfilled its part of the vow by devoting the king of Arad, his Canaanite subjects, and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place became Hormah, which means “utter destruction.”

“It was a great victory for Israel, because it was their first victory! This king was the first of many Canaanite kings to be killed and these cities were the first of many Canaanite cities to be conquered. It was the Israelites’ first taste of victory and it was the Canaanites’ first taste of defeat! Hormah (or Destruction) was a warning to the evil-practicing, God-hating, idol-worshipping Canaanites of what was going to happen to them all . . . very soon. God was about to execute His Righteous Judgement on all their wickedness” (Ganz).

Devotion to destruction

The vow utterly to destroy brings up a question: What does the term, “to devote to destruction,” mean? And

why would such destruction be condoned by God? First, let us remember that our God is good and kind. As He told Moses, “The LORD, the LORD God, [is] compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth; who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.”

This is our God—loving, patient, truthful, forgiving. Nevertheless, God does not let people get by with sin and wickedness. He also told Moses, “He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations” (Exodus 34:6, 7).

Wickedness

✓The wickedness of the nations in Canaan was extremely dreadful. Some people have said that if those people had not been destroyed, ✓their diseases would have killed off the population. God had been very patient with these nations for hundreds of years. He had delayed Israel’s conquest of the land, saying to Abraham 460 years before, “[Israel] shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete” (Genesis 15:16). Four hundred years of patience is indeed great longsuffering. The iniquity of the Amorites was now finally complete. God was positioning Israel to conquer and devote to destruction all those wicked nations.

Exceptions

Three nations were to be exceptions to the rule of destruction. One would expect these kingdoms to be friendly, for they were ancestral relatives—Lot’s family in Moab and Ammon and Esau’s family in Edom. Even if these kingdoms were not friendly, God gave specific instructions to remain at peace with them.

First, Edom. God said, “You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you. So be very careful. Do not contend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall purchase food and water from them with money so that you may eat and drink.”

In our last lesson we learned that Edom did not respond well at all to these gracious terms. Israel couldn’t fight against Edom nor pass through it but had to go around its borders.

The next nation about which God cautioned was Moab. Again, God said, “Do not harass Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession because I have given Ar to the people of Lot for a possession.” We will hear about Moab’s fear of Israel and its response in a later lesson.

God said almost exactly the same thing about Ammon as He had said about Moab: “When you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.” Therefore, Israel bypassed Ammon as well as Edom and Moab.

Moving on

By this time thirty-eight years had passed since the spies had brought a bad report at Kadesh-Barnea. The “entire generation, that is, the men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp, until they had perished” (Deuteronomy 2:14, 15).

Now God said, “Rise up and go over the [river] Zered.” [Locate on the map found below; it is at the southern end of the Dead Sea, which is not labeled on the map.] By crossing the Zered River, Israel was finally done with its forty-year aimless wandering and was beginning the last leg of its journey to the promised land.

¹Genesis 14:5 and 6 lists these same giants. In that passage we also learn that Chedorlaomer decimated many of

them way back at the time of Abraham and Lot.

²“The word Zamzummims, according to [a source named Hillerus], signifies contrivers of evil and terrible things; they were inventors of wickedness, crafty and subtle in forming wicked and mischievous designs, which struck terror into people, and made them formidable” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/deuteronomy-2-20.html>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Edom reviled Israel, but Israel did not seek revenge. Jesus was reviled by the religious leaders of His day, but He submitted Himself to the will of God, even death on the cross at the hands of those religious leader for the sake of His people.
- “Hormah/Destruction was also a warning to the whole world: God keeps His Promise; God fulfils His Word. Do not fight against the LORD. Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Ganz).

Activities:

- Play dough: a giant; bow and arrows
- Snack: Big Macs[®] from McDonald’s[®] restaurants cut into age-appropriate pieces or some other “giant”-named food
- Review questions: (Game: Each student who answers a question correctly may circle around the other students once to show the wandering of Israel in the wilderness.)
 1. The nations, Moab and Ammon, came from what man in Genesis? Hint: He was Abraham’s nephew. [Lot.]
 2. The nation Edom came from what man in Genesis? Hint: He was a twin brother to Jacob. [Esau.]
 3. Name one of the several giant tribes. [Emim, Rephaim, Anakim, Horites, Zamzummim, Avim.]
 4. What did the Canaanite, the king of Arad, do when he saw Israel was coming close to Canaan? [He fought against Israel and took some of them captive.]
 5. What did Israel vow to the Lord? [“If you give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction.”]
 6. When Israel devoted Arad and his city to destruction, why did they name the place Hormah? What does the word *Hormah* mean? [Destruction.]
 7. Name one of the three nations God said not to battle because He had given its ancestors those lands? [Edom, Moab, Ammon.]
 8. How many years had gone by since the people had been at Kadesh? [Thirty-eight.]
 9. Who had died in that time? [The entire generation—the men of war who had rebelled at Kadesh.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 20:1–17. An enlarged copy of the words, the “Exodus 20:1–17” song sheet, and motions are in Lesson 12.15 or on the “Lessons” and “Songs” pages at teachingthebibletochildren.org. “Stop! It’s the Law,” a song that teaches only the basic Ten Commandments, is found on the same “Songs” page.

Handwork:

- Do a word search from past stories of Moses. An easy one may be found at <http://www.dltk-bible.com/word-search/wordsearch-moses.htm>. A more difficult one is at <http://www.dltk-bible.com/t.asp?t=http://www.dltk-bible.com/word-search/c-wordsearch-moses-caps.gif>.

to devote to
destruction



Wilderness <http://godswarplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/17.234211COPY.jpg>



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Giants

Emim* “terrors”	Moab
Zamzummim “buzzers”	Ammon
Horites* or Horim	Seir; Esau dispossessed them
Avim	Philistia; Caphtorim (Egypt?) dispossessed them
Rephaim*	Northwest Canaan
Zuzim*	Ham
Anakim	South Canaan near Hebron
Amorites*/ Canaanites	All of Canaan

*Chedorlaomer had smitten these giants as recorded in Genesis 14:5–7.