

Deuteronomy 2:24-25

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Moses reminds the Israelites of the time when God commanded them to confront Sihon in order to take possession of his land.

In [Deuteronomy 2:20-23](#), Moses interrupted the flow of the narrative to provide information on the original occupants of the Land of Ammon. There, we learned that the land of Ammon was formerly inhabited by the giant race called “Rephaim” but *the Ammonites call them Zamzummin*. We also learned that the Caphtorim destroyed the Avvim and settled *in their place*. In this section, Moses resume the narrative of the journey with three imperative verbs — to arise, to set out, and to pass through — as he recalls God’s command to His people to engage *Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon*. These verbs give us a picture of how God wanted His people to act.

God said to them: *arise, set out, and pass through the valley of Arnon*. The verb translated as “arise” has the basic meaning of “to stand,” and conveys the idea of rising from a prostrate position, as in [Joshua 3:16](#). Its use in our context, however, connotes the idea of arising for action and could be translated as “get up,” or “be ready.” The second verb (set out) expresses the second movement. It means “to pull out,” “to pull up,” “to journey,” or “to march.” The third movement is to *pass through*. This verb can also be translated as “to pass over,” or “to pass by.”

The piling up of these verbs not only strengthens God’s command, but also dictates the precise course of action His people were to take. So, God’s people were to get up, march, and *pass through the valley of Arnon* in order to conquer Heshbon. *The valley of Arnon* was a deep ravine located at the border between Moab and the territory of King Sihon. By giving the people the precise direction to take, God guaranteed them success over *Sihon* and the Amorites.

Finally, God provided support and encouragement for His people when He said, “*Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand.*” As the French expression goes, it is a *fait accompli* (it’s a done deal). Now Israel must *begin to take possession and contend with King Sihon in battle*. From that time on, God indicated that He was going to *put the dread and fear of Israel upon the peoples everywhere under the*

heavens. Thus, when the *peoples* heard the report of Israel, how the LORD used them to defeat the enemy, they would *tremble and be in anguish*. God desired to use one nation (Israel) to make Himself known throughout the world. So, when God said He would instill in the Amorites and other *peoples everywhere* “*dread*” and “*fear*,” He wanted to teach them that He is the LORD, the great warrior who fights for His chosen people.

Biblical Text:

²⁴ **‘Arise, set out, and pass through the valley of Arnon. Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand; begin to take possession and contend with him in battle. ²⁵ ‘This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.’**