

# Deuteronomy 2:9-15

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*As Moses continues his history lesson, he reminds the Israelites of God's command not to molest the Moabites because, like the Edomites, they are Israel's kinsmen. Their land was allocated to them by the LORD.*

The next phase of the journey took the people of God through *Moab*, a country located east of the Dead Sea. As the Israelites approached the land of Moab, God told them to protect the Moabites. He stated, "*Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war.*" The verb translated by the NASB as "to harass" basically means "to treat someone as an enemy," or "to show hostility to someone." The verb "to provoke" means "to engage in strife with someone." God used these two verbs together to strengthen His command to His people so that they would not engage in war with the Moabites. God added, "*For I will not give you any of their land as a possession.*" The Moabite land was to remain unmolested because God had *given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession*. Here, the text alludes to a region in *Moab* called *Ar* to refer to the whole land of *Moab*.

The land of Moab gets its name from the man called "Moab," the son of Lot with his elder daughter. The story of Lot and his daughters is recorded in [Genesis 19](#). In this text, we see that when Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, Lot and his two daughters "escaped to the mountains" (v. 17). The text clearly indicates that the LORD spared them because of His compassion: "God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived" (v. 29). So, Lot and his daughters relocated and lived "in the mountains."

Now having lived in the mountains without husbands, the two daughters of Lot made him "drink wine" and "lay with him" so that they could "preserve" their "family through" him ([Genesis 19:32-38](#)). Thus, Lot's daughters brought forth sons, whom they named "Moab" and "Ben-Ammi." Moab became the father of the nation of Moab and Ben-Ammi of Ammon. The story clearly demonstrates that the Moabites and the Israelites were closely related because Lot was Abraham's nephew, according to [Genesis 12:5](#). That explains why God warned the Israelites not to disrespect their relatives ([Deuteronomy 2:9](#)).

In [Deuteronomy 2:10-12](#), Moses opens a parenthesis to give some details regarding the people who previously occupied Moab and Edom. The land of Moab was originally inhabited by the *Emim*.

Those *people were great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim* and were *regarded as Rephaim*, an ancient race of giants living in Palestine during the time of Abraham ([Genesis 15:20](#)). *But the Moabites call them Emim*. As far as the land of *Seir* (Edom) is concerned, it was originally inhabited by the *Horites, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place. The sons of Esau dispossessed the Horites* because it was the LORD who fought for them to give them *Seir as a possession* (v. 22).

Moses explained what *the sons of Esau* did to the *Horites* through a figure of speech involving the comparison of one item with another item using “as,” or “like.” He said, “*just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave to them.*” The implication of the comparison is that *the sons of Esau* had the right to dispossess *the Horites* from *Seir just as Israel* dispossessed the Amorites and the Canaanites from the land of Canaan.

Therefore, the purpose of this background information was to remind the Israelites of the inviolability of the lands of Moab and Edom because they were allocated to their current inhabitants by the LORD ([Deuteronomy 32:8](#)). Again, this demonstrates that God cares for other families of the earth besides Israel.

In verse 13, Moses resumed his itinerary with the word “now” to connect this section back to verse 9. However, whereas verse 9 contains negative commands, verse 13 contains positive ones. God said to His people, “*Arise and cross over the brook Zered yourselves*” (v. 13). The *brook Zered* is the southern border of Moab. It flows into the Dead Sea. Moses reminded the Israelites of their obedience to God’s order when he said, “*So we crossed over the brook Zered.*” The crossing of this *brook* marked the end of the Israelites’ wanderings in the wilderness.

Finally, Moses reminded the Israelites of their journey from the time they left Kadesh-barnea in the second year after the Exodus to the time they *crossed over the brook Zered* in the fortieth year, right before he [Moses] began his speech on the first day of the eleventh month (1:3). Moses declared, “*Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years.*”

God allowed His people to wander in the wilderness for thirty-eight years until “*all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as He had sworn to them.*” Because of the rebellion of the old generation of Israelites, *the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished.*” Therefore, verses 14 and 15 serve to mark the transition between the old generation, which rebelled against God’s command at Kadesh-barnea, and the new generation that would enter and possess Canaan. With this turning point, the promise of God was fulfilled: “not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers” (1:35).

### **Biblical Text:**

<sup>9</sup> “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.’ <sup>10</sup> (The Emim lived there formerly, a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim. <sup>11</sup> Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. <sup>12</sup> The Horites formerly lived in Seir, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the Lord gave to them.) <sup>13</sup> ‘Now arise and cross over the brook Zered yourselves.’ So we crossed over the brook Zered. <sup>14</sup> “Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them. <sup>15</sup> “Moreover the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished.