

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

Today's lesson text summarizes the military campaign against the two eastern kings (Sihon and Og) and the distribution of their territories to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh by Moses.

- What our lesson text from the Book of Joshua doesn't tell us is the subject of our lesson. The route the Israelites traveled from Egypt to the Promise Land was called the King's highway.

This is recorded in the Book of Numbers 20:17 and 21:21-22: "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of Amorites, saying, 'Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the king's highway until we have passed through your border.'" (Num.21:21-22)

The **king's highway** began in Egypt and stretched across the Sinai Peninsula to Acqaba and turned northward to Damascus and then to the Euphrates River.

It was the major trade and military route between the north and south. Most biblical scholars believe that it received its name from the kings along the route who contributed for it to be built.

This lesson will study SIX aspects of how the King's Highway was involved in the history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

1. Many biblical scholars believe the coalition army under Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, traveled down the king's highway to invade the cities of the plain (Sodom and Gomorrah) in Genesis 14.

You will recall that they took Lot a prisoner of war and Abraham pursued them with 318 soldiers and chased them up the king's highway all the way to Damacus and rescued Lot: "And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people." (Gen.14:15-16)

2. The next time the king's highway becomes important to biblical history is when Moses traveled it from Egypt to Canaan with the Exodus generation.

Moses crossed the Sinai and picked-up the king's highway at Acqaba and turned northward towards Canaan – "Then we turned and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and circled Mount Seir for many days." (Deut.2:1) You have circled this mountain long enough. **Now turn north.**" (2:3)

They traveled up the **king's highway** to the lands of Edom and Moab on their way to the Promised Land as recorded in Numbers 20:14-21 (Deut.2:1-13) – "Please let us pass through your land. We shall pass trough you field or through vineyard; we shall go along the **king's highway**, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory." (20:17).

3. Israelites traveled the king's highway until they reached the eastern border of the Promised Land.

It was here that the Israelites encountered the two eastern kings (Sihon and Og) and defeated them (Num.21:21-22; Deut.1:3-5).

Lord to Moses: “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, shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.” (Deut.2:25)

Moses to King Sihon: “Let me pass through your land, I will travel only on **the highway**; I will not turn aside to the right or the left.” (Deut.2:27)

4. After defeating Sihon, Moses traveled up the king’s highway to Bashan to take on King Og, one of the last giants of the land (Josh.12:4).

“Then we **turned and went up the road** to Bashan, and Og, king of Bashan, with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Edrei. But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshon.’” (Deut.3:1-2; Num.21:31-35)

5. I find it interesting that the Israelites who traveled the King’s Highway with the King of Kings didn’t reach the fulfillment of their destiny in the plan of God because of a lack of faith (Heb.3-4).

Those who traveled the King’s Highway from Egypt to the Promised Land had been recently redeemed from Egyptian bondage by God’s grace and miraculous power.

Yet only two out of a couple million of the Exodus occupied the Promise Land (Deut.31:1-8) – “They shall surely die in the wilderness. And not a man was left of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.” (Num.26:65)

“And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, **that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.** Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” (Deut.8:3-4)

6. Jesus talked to doubting Thomas about the King’s Highway that leads to heaven:

“Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘**I am the way** (hodos / highway), and the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father, but through Me.’” (John 14:5-6)

What about you? Do you have the assurance that whether you live or die you are traveling on the **King’s Highway**?

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, **that Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, **and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures.” (1Cor.15:3-4/ this called the gospel of Jesus Christ)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation **to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Rom.1:16)

TRAVELING THE KING’S HIGHWAY