

Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge

Lesson #30

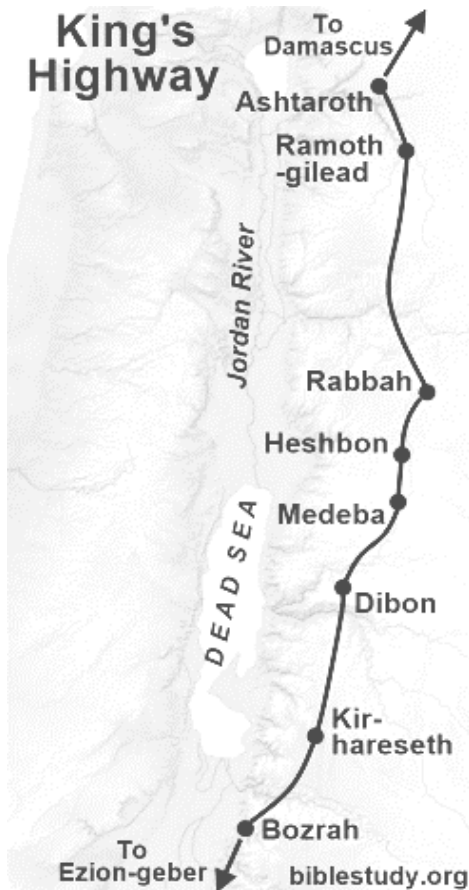
Iniquity Of The Amorites

Aug. 19, 2026

Significance Of: King's Highway; Rephaim; East side of Jordan River; Enemies Entrenched

The King's Highway: The land east of the Jordan River contained the most important north-south Biblical trading route known as the King's Highway.

This ancient road was an essential trade route that connected the kingdoms of Egypt and Mesopotamia. These 2 nations represented the world and sin.



The 1st War Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, was angered that the rulers of Sodom & Gomorrah rebelled against him. He led a military coalition that plundered and subjugated several peoples along the King's Highway. [Gen. 14:1-2, 4-5] His campaign, the first war in the Bible, began with overcoming the giant warriors [Rephaim] living in Ashtaroth [Gen. 14:5].

**Note: The Rephaim are present again after the flood. The Israelites will meet another Rephaim on the east side of the Jordan.*

He then destroyed the Zuzims, Emims and Horites as he journeyed south to El-paran near Ezion-geber. Chedorlaomer's actions were driven by the need to suppress rebellion and secure his empire's economic interests. By attacking these groups, he aimed to send a clear message to the five city-states, including Sodom and Gomorrah, that defiance would not be tolerated.

It was a turning point for the nation of Israel when the older generation was gone.

With their time of divine discipline ended, Israel could now look forward to

- defeating their enemies and moving into their Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 2-3 tells of the journey upon leaving Kadesh-Barnea.

Deut. 2:3 "You have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward."

As the Israelites journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land, they encountered various nations and peoples. The lands east of the Jordan River were inhabited by powerful kings and their armies. The Israelites, guided by God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, sought passage through these territories.

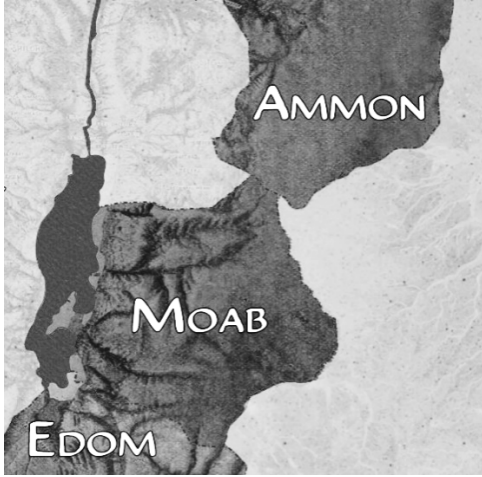
However, the kings of these regions opposed their passage, leading to military confrontations.

Moses: Put your trust in God and march to capture the land on the eastern side of the Jordan River. God's Instructions:

It took ~20 months to go from Kadesh to the Jordan River across from Jericho. Why?

➤ Israel was smitten with delays:

Initially, they would have conflict with the Edomites, Moabites, & Ammonites.



Deut. 2:4-5 You are going to pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful; do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, not even as much as a footprint, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.

Num. 20:14-18 Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom.

"Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, ¹⁵ how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. ¹⁶ When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border.

¹⁷ Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; [1st mention] we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.' Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword."

The King's Highway serves as a symbol of the Israelites' journey and the challenges they faced in their quest to reach the Promised Land.

Significant Problem: The enemy is controlling the King's Highway.

This request to pass through the land of Edom takes place at the end of Moses' life.

He requests, from Edom's king, that the migrating Israelites be allowed to follow the royal pathway through his land as they journey to claim their inheritance.

Num. 20:17 We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.

King of Edom threatened to attack the Israelites if they attempted to use the King's Highway.

- The refusal of passage by Edom and the subsequent conflicts with the Amorites underscore the obstacles and opposition encountered by God's people.

The Edomites terse refusal of Moses' request, and threat of war,

forced God's people to travel a much longer route [Num. 20:18 - 21].

Num. 20:21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border:

wherefore Israel turned away from him. This rejection led to frustration among the people, and they complained to Moses and Aaron about the lack of water and food in the desert.

As a result of their complaints, God instructed Moses to speak to a rock and bring forth water for the people. However, Moses struck the rock twice with his staff in anger instead of speaking to it. While water still miraculously gushed forth, this act of disobedience had consequences for Moses and Aaron, as God deemed them unfit to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

Num. 20: 22 And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor. Aaron dies > spend 30 days mourning

Deut. 2:9 Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not attack 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.'

Deut. 2:19 When you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not attack them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession.'

In Gen 15:16 God told Abraham that: "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

They were an iniquitous people but their sin was not yet at a level that God would sanction their destruction. 400 years passed. God is long-suffering and patient, waiting for repentance.

The enemies to be defeated on the east side:

- Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon, and Amorite King Og of Bashan. [Deut. 2:24-36]
- Evil Amorites goal is to defeat Israelites BEFORE they cross the Jordan River and enter The Promised Land.

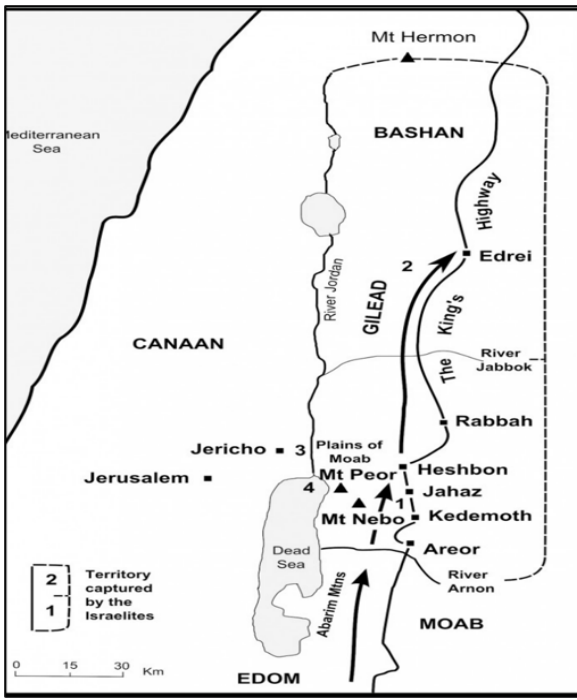
Facing The Giants: King Sihon And King Og: Numbers 21:21-35, Deut. 2:24-3:11

The first major antediluvian battle between Godly believers and the Rephaim, terrible ones, took place in the region east of the Jordan River. Og, a Rephaim, and Sihon, two Amorite kings, stood between the nation of Israel and entry into the Promised Land.

Amorites are territorial spirits who like to dominate over great numbers of people.

These larger-than-life fierce enemies were the last who Moses would defeat on behalf of the children of Israel. Their conquest was miraculous and unimaginable.

The Bible describes the Amorites as a dominant tribe that ruled Bashan and Gilead.



The Israelites initially requested peaceful passage through Sihon's territory but found themselves immediately on the cusp of battle:

Sihon, king of the Amorites, was a mighty king with a strong and terrible army.

He ruled, from the city of Heshbon, a pagan nation located east of the Jordan River near the Promised Land during the time of Moses.

Deut. 2:24-25 Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon:

behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and Contend With Him In Battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee.

- As a result, God's people were no longer too scared to face the giants and powerful armies that lay ahead. They learned to trust God no matter how big the problem.

Num. 21:21-22 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

²² Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's highway, until we be past thy borders. [out of Your Territory].

Num. 21:23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border:

but Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

- Amorite spirit will threaten non-submissive followers.

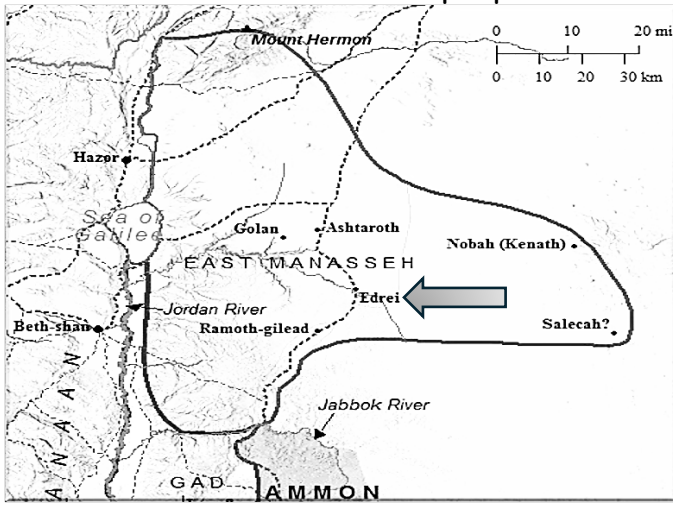
Num. 21:24-25 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok... ²⁵ And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.

Israel defeated a mighty enemy that seemed indestructible.

This added to the new nation's growing fierce reputation that began spreading into Canaan even before they crossed the Jordan.

After this victory, Moses and his men headed for the land of Bashan which was comprised of 60 walled cities [WOW] and many unwallied towns. Og, king of Bashan, was the last survivor of the Rephaim [terrible ones] who were giants and fierce fighters.

Deut. 3:1 Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og, king of Bashan, came out with all his people to meet us in battle at Edrei.



Note: Edrei is right on the King's Highway!
See the dotted line

Consider: He had a massive defensive advantage provided by his city walls. Why would Og leave his cities and enter into open combat with Israel? Why take the risk when his armies could remain behind their walls for the Israelites to try and siege?

Joshua 24:12 And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.

Deut. 3:2-11 But the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have handed him and all his people and his land over to you; and you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.'

What had God promised in Deut. 2:25?

This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

Deut. 3:3 -11 So the LORD our God also handed over to us Og, king of Bashan, with all his people, and we struck them until no survivor was left. ⁴ We captured all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many unwallied towns. ⁶ We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. ⁷ But all the animals and the spoils of the cities we took as our plunder.

⁸ "So at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of Arnon to Mount Hermon... ¹⁰ all the cities of the plateau, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. King Og represents the ultimate obstacle or enemy that must be overcome by faith, representing the last remnant of the Rephaim giants and the power of God's promise to deliver His people. His defeat by the Israelites is often seen as a metaphor for conquering seemingly insurmountable challenges through divine strength.

Note: The territory of the two defeated Amorite kings became the inheritance of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and $\frac{1}{2}$ the tribe of Manasseh [Num. 32:21-33:39; Deut. 3:8-13].

Key: The defeat of the kings east of the Jordan was a significant event in the history of Israel, marking the initial stages of the Israelites' conquest of the Promised Land.

These victories were crucial in establishing the Israelites' presence and dominance in the region and along the King's Highway before crossing the Jordan River into Canaan.

These victories demonstrated the Lord's faithfulness and power, fulfilling His promises to give the Israelites the land He had sworn to their ancestors.

They serve as a testament to God's unwavering commitment to His people and His ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles on their behalf.

The victories also served to instill fear among the remaining Canaanite nations, paving the way for the subsequent conquest of Canaan under Joshua.

Num. 22:1-2 Then the Israelites moved and set up camp across from Jericho, on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River. [Promised Land is in sight! Last stop before crossing!]

Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

³ The Moabites were very afraid because there were so many Israelites.

Besides, the Moabites couldn't stand these people.

After the Israelites' major victories, the Moabites hired Balaam to curse Israel.

He instructed them to use their women to seduce the Israelite men.

The Israelites mingled with the pagan women and joined in the worship of Baal of Peor.

Due to this idolatry, God killed 24,000 Jews. [new generation]

Consider: This happened following the 2 major victories over the Amorite Kings.

Michael Heiser: The Unseen Realm

Question: What do Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ at Caesarea Philippi, the Nephilim, the worship of Baal, and the locations of Mount Hermon and the land of Bashan, the strong bulls of Bashan all have in common?

Bashan can mean a "fertile, stoneless piece of ground." Lush, fertile pastureland

East of Jordan River and Sea of Galilee. [2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tribes desire cows of Bashan]

Another meaning of this root of Bashan is "Serpent" [Eve's desire; looked good]

- [Lete, del O. G. (1999). Bashan. In K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, & P. W. van der Horst [Eds.], Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible

- Caesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon reside in the territory of the land of Bashan.

A Spiritual Battle Between Mt. Hermon & Mt. Zion

Mt. Hermon was one of 2 sacred mountains of the Canaanites.

Mt. Hermon is said to be at odds with God's holy mountain, Zion.

Ps. 68:15-16 God chose Mt. Zion for His dwelling even though it was much smaller and less imposing than Mt. Hermon which is over 9,000'.

The Psalmist David pictured the other mountains as jealous because they were not selected. Mt. Zion was to be God's dwelling place. [Ps. 132:13-14; I Kings 8:12-13]

Mount Hermon, Baal, Rebellious Angels & the Nephilim

According to the Book of Enoch and Jewish tradition, Mount Hermon was the gathering place of the rebellious angels who descended from its heights to mate with the daughters of men, resulting in the birth of the Nephilim. [hybrid race of giants]

The Phoenicians, worshippers of Baal, [Jezebel; I Kgs. 18:19], considered Mt. Hermon to be the mountain of Baal.

Biblical accounts in Judges 3:3 & I Chron. 5:23 state the mountain was considered sacred to the worshippers of the Canaanite god Baal.

Extensive excavations found over 20 temples on her slopes.

Mount Hermon, holiest of all, had other mystical attributes as well on her slopes.

Inhabitants Of Bashan

Bashan was called the land or hell of the Rephaim [giants, terrible ones].

Bashan was said to be the residence of the dead and deified kings.

Amorite King Og, the giant with six fingers and toes resided in Bashan.

- Num. 21:33; Deut. 3:1-17

Deut.3:11, 13 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants;

behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it...[13' long by 6' wide]

A man needing this size of bed was likely very tall—ten or eleven feet.

Although Og reigned over the Amorites and was called the king of the Amorites,

he himself belonged to the giant-like people Rephaim, and was their last survivor.

Joshua 12:4-5 "The other king was Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the giants [Hebrew = *Rephaim*], who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon."

The Gates of Hades - Hell

Mt. Hermon was one of 2 sacred mountains of the Canaanites.

The other was in the NW corner of modern Syria, overlooking the ancient city of Ugarit.

Ugaritic texts: Bashan was clearly identified as the underworld.

"For the 'Canaanites' of Ugarit, the Bashan region, or a part of it, clearly represented 'Hell,' the celestial and infernal abode of their deified dead kings.

It is possible that this localization of the Canaanite Hell is linked to the ancient tradition of the place as the ancestral home of their dynasty...the Biblical Rephaim."

[Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, 2nd Ed. (Eerdmans, 1999), "Bashan," p. 162]

The *Rephaim/Rapum* are the subject of an entire set of tablets retrieved from Ugarit's ruins.

Rephaim are described as "the gods" tablet 1, line 1, and

"the divine ones . . . the warriors of Baal" tablet 3, lines 6-7

called "the Rephaim of the underworld" . . . tablet 2, column 3

These descriptions are consistent with those of the Bible, which uses *rephaim* to denote

- several tribes of giants in Canaan Gen. 14:15ff, I Sam. 17, II Sam. 21:16ff
- but also the spirits of the dead Ps. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; Isa. 14:9, 26:14 & 19
- including at least some that were slain in the Flood Job 26:5

There is complete agreement between the Ugaritic texts, the Biblical texts, pagan Greek tradition [Hesiod, as noted in *Dic. of Deities*, p. 235], the ancient Jewish tradition [Enoch 15:8ff, Jubilees 10:5ff] & the ancient Church tradition [Justin Martyr, Athenagoras] that:

- the demons were the souls of a race of "heroes" Greek term
- "gods" Ugaritic texts
- or hybrid human-angelic race Biblical, Jewish, & Christian tradition

who once walked the earth, died, but whose spirits remained and could now be contacted by mortals.

Suddenly, the terror shown by the Midianites [Num. 22] and the Canaanites [Jos. 2:9] makes perfect sense. It wasn't just a general sense of dread that God sent to paralyze them. They were confronting a mysterious people who walked under the visible Presence of the Holy One, a God who had destroyed Egypt to take His people out, and who had just marched His people through Canaanite Hell and killed its king, Og of Bashan - as the *warmup* to the conquest of the Land!

Provoking the Forces of Hades: New Testament

Two events in Jesus' earthly ministry

Exorcism of a "Legion" of demons from a man in the "country of the Gadarenes.

Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-37

When Jesus and the disciples crossed over Galilee to its eastern shore,

they were literally stepping into territory ruled over by "fallen angel rulers."

When confronted by the Son of God, the demons initially resist being cast out,

begging not to be sent away "into the Abyss" or "out of the country." [Mark 5:10]

The country of the Gadarenes was within the ancient boundaries of Bashan.

The demons begged not to be sent from that particular plot of real-estate.

They were the spirits of the Rephaim, who had dwelt there for thousands of years, being alternately sought-after and feared by the mortal inhabitants.

Jesus & His Disciples in Caesarea Philippi

In New Testament times, Caesarea Philippi, on the border of ancient Bashan, lay at the foot of Mt. Hermon. This area was saturated with temples and statues to the Greek gods. It was also associated with Baal, the Nephilim, the name "place of the serpent" and the realm of the dead.

Earlier, this area was a cave grotto dedicated to various fertility gods, which were believed to go into the ground during the winter and come out in the summer. Called 'the gates of Hades;' the realm of the dead, the underworld.

The Cave of Pan [goat god] was called "The Gates of Hades."

In the midst of the Baal shrines at Caesarea Philippi, etched into the side of Mount Hermon to worship pan, Peter proclaimed Jesus to be The Christ, the Son of The Living God. [Matt. 16:16] This was No coincidence that His testimony was made amongst pagan worship, "In the darkest place possible, Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, and the light of God shone on Bashan through Peter's confession."

Consider: At this point, Jesus had shown part of His hand - the game plan was starting to unfold and the enemy had gotten a whiff of it. These 'sons of God' [aka fallen angels / gods] from that region weren't going to give up willingly.

Matt. 16:20 Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ. Jesus immediately begins to tell His disciples He will have to go to Jerusalem, suffer and die because of His ministry [Matt. 16:21].

Ps. 22:1, 11-13 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my help are the words of my groaning. ¹¹Do not be far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

Many bulls have surrounded me: strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

- This was obviously a prophecy of what was to happen on Calvary.
- The psalmist wasn't shown a vision of angry bulls from the Golan Heights surrounding Christ on the cross.

He was given a glimpse into the future at *spirits* from Bashan, demonic entities represented by strong bulls, who surrounded the cross to celebrate what they thought was their victory over the Messiah.

The curiously worded "strong bulls of Bashan" surrounding Jesus at the time, were the unseen forces of darkness that gathered to ensure His incarnation would come to an end.

However, this was the "goal."

I Cor. 2:7-8 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ⁸ Which none of the princes [rulers] of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Could these be the "strong bulls of Bashan," the "sons of God" in Gen. 6, who were now the gods or rulers of the nations in that region?

Paul says, they wouldn't have done this if they'd known that Resurrection was part of God's mystery hidden before time began, for it was His massive own goal, a sting operation, with the Cross as the "ultimate honeytrap."

Col. 2:14-15 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Possible Conclusion:

The strong bulls of Bashan were the judged 'sons of God', spiritual authorities who had been assigned over the nations of the world. They gathered at the scene of the crucifixion and were defeated in the light of the dawn of the Resurrection that would come days later.

The King's Highway serves as a symbol of the Israelites' journey & the challenges they faced in their quest to reach the Promised Land.

Just as the Israelites sought a path to their physical inheritance, believers are called to walk the spiritual path laid out by God, trusting in His provision and direction.

- Obedience to God: The refusal of the King of Edom to allow passage highlights the necessity of following God's commands, even when faced with obstacles.
- Faithful Navigation: The Israelites' determination to stay on the King's Highway without deviation reflects the commitment to remain faithful to God's path, despite challenges.
- Stay True to God's Word: Just as the Israelites were instructed to follow a specific route, believers are called to adhere to God's teachings and guidance.
- Endurance in Trials: The journey along the King's Highway was not without difficulties. This symbolizes the trials we face in our faith journey.

It is the path of absolute surrender and sanctification which leads to our abundant life.

The King's Highway, Way of Holiness:

- Serves as a metaphor for the path of faith, righteousness, obedience, holiness, perseverance and divine guidance
- It signifies a straight and clear path for spiritual growth and closeness to God.
- It is used as a symbol of preparation and readiness for the coming of the Lord.

Warning: The enemy threatens to attack me if I attempt to use the King's Highway in pursuit of holiness, sanctification, absolute surrender and the abundant life.

Joshua 1:7 Only be strong and very courageous,

that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may prosper wherever you go.

The concept of the King's Highway is echoed in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed Himself as The Way, The Truth, & The Life.

His message of salvation & redemption resonates with the imagery of a divine highway leading believers to eternal life.