



Deuteronomy 2:24-37

The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon

The account here is parallel to that found in Numbers 21. The two really have to be taken together to get a full view of what is going on. And for the most part, that is what will be presented. When something needs to be compared to, or aligned with, the earlier story of Sihon, it will be laid out for you in that way.

Here we have a real battle that actually took place about 3400 years ago. And yet, it anticipates another actual battle that hasn't even happened yet in human history. But along with that is the fact that these stories have parallels to our own battles in life.

I'm not one to make extended moral applications out of these passages, but it just cannot be overlooked that there are spiritual and moral parallels to what occurs in our own lives. For example, Israel is going to battle against a foe. It is a foe who is on the offensive in this particular battle, and Israel will respond to his aggression as it comes.

Once attacked though, we are not only assured the victory, as Israel was, but we are also able to go on out on our own offensive

engagements, just as Israel was. We are the Lord's people, and we have been provided both defensive and offensive weapons, and we have the ability to destroy what the enemy has built...

Text Verse: For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

Paul speaks of pulling down strongholds. That is an offensive type of warfare. He also speaks of casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself. Those, likewise, are offensive maneuvers.

What Israel does in these verses in a physical realm very well mirrors the things we are to do as outlined by Paul. As I said, moral and spiritual applications of such things aren't my main focus, but they do have their place.

In any given passage from the Old Testament, one can often find one of four main uses for it: a literal and historical account, a moral application, a prophetic application, and a pictorial application – meaning something that pictures something else.

As you read the Bible, it is always interesting to think on how these all fit into whatever you are reading, but you also have to be careful to not over-spiritualize things in the process. Unless what you are looking at is actually and accurately revealed in another way, it is best to not simply make stuff up. That is counter-productive and can lead people down unhealthy paths very quickly.

In all things, be sure the word is carefully handled, and you will do well. For today, we have some rather interesting prophetic and pictorial things that we will be looking into. Such interesting things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let's turn to that

precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. This Day I Will Begin (verses 24-26)

The words here are the continued words of the Lord which began in verse 18. Moses has been quoting Him since then.

²⁴“Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon.

As noted in Numbers 21, the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. Upon entering this area, the final trek before leading into Canaan is seen.

The name Arnon comes from *ranan*. It signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus rejoicing. Therefore, this is the Roaring Stream. Upon crossing this river, they are no longer in a land which the Lord intends to be left alone. The inhabitants of the land they will now encounter are those noted to Abraham over four hundred years earlier –

“Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” Genesis 15:12-16

Abraham was promised the land of Canaan, a land where Amorites also dwelt. However, the Lord was not yet ready for them to be dispossessed. They had not done enough evil to justify their extermination.

But the Lord knew that by the end of these four hundred years, their iniquity would be so great that they would need to be destroyed. Therefore, the promise to Abraham was delayed until that time.

Some look at the extermination of these people as a brutal and unjust act by the Hebrew people, but they fail to see that the Lord treated Israel in exactly the same manner. For example, when Israel's iniquity had become so great, there was eventually nothing else that could be done but allow their destruction and exile –

And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

¹⁷ Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. ²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. 2 Chronicles 36:15-21

The only difference between the extermination of the Amorites and the destruction of Israel is that the Lord had made a covenant with Abraham, and He had made a covenant with Israel.

Despite their conduct, which was as bad and often worse than those they dispossessed, the Lord kept His covenant promises to them. No such covenant was made with the Amorites however...

24 (con't) Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land.

The narrative will be filled in later as to what will bring about the coming battle. For now, Moses states the words as a fact. The land is given into Israel's hand. Unfortunately for these Amorites, and unlike the others whom Israel has already encountered, there was no word of protection from the Lord for these people.

The name Sihon, or *Sikhon*, was introduced in Numbers 21:21. He is actually referred to many times in the Old Testament, even as late as the time of Jeremiah. This is because his name is directly associated with the land he rules. We do the same today when we might say, "This is the land of Chief Red Cloud."

Sihon's name comes from a root which signifies "to sweep away," or "to strike down." Thus, his name may signify anything from "Tempestuous" to "Warrior."

He is defined further as *melekh kheshvon ha'emori*, or "king of Heshbon the Amorite." The word *kheshvon*, comes from *khashav*. It is a word which signifies to consider, calculate, or devise. Therefore, it signifies an explanation of things, or "Intelligence."

Amorite comes from *amar*, meaning to utter or say. Therefore, the name signifies being spoken of, and thus "Renowned." The idea with the combination of his name, title, and location, is that despite his greatness as a warrior, despite the intelligence of the foe, and despite the renown of the people, Israel is assured victory.

As He says, "I have given." The king, meaning he and all the people and the land, is given as a possession. The time of the iniquity of the Amorites is full, and Israel is to be used as the instrument of the Lord's judgment against them.

One cannot find fault in the Lord, who is the Creator, and thus sovereign over His creation. He had mercy on this group of people for four hundred years, and in that time their iniquity grew to the point where there was no other remedy than their destruction. Therefore, Israel is told to...

²⁴ (con't) Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle.

In verse 2:5, the word *garah*, or “engage,” was first used. It signifies to stir up, coming from a primitive root meaning to grate, and thus it figuratively means to anger. Here, it means to excite oneself against another.

It has been used three times to prohibit Israel from stirring up a fight. In 2:5, they were prohibited from stirring up a fight with the descendants of Esau. In 2:9, it was then seen that they were not to stir up a fight with the descendants of Moab. And in 2:19, they were then told to not stir up a fight with the sons of Ammon.

Now, it is used for the fourth and last time in the books of Moses to do exactly the opposite. They are to actively *garah*, or engage, the Amorites in battle for the purpose of possessing what will be dispossessed by Sihon. But there is further reason for conducting this battle which is outside of Canaan proper...

²⁵ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven,

The reason for stating this now, rather than after the events of the actual account, which begin in verse 26, is to set the stage for Israel’s victories in relation to the nations of the world. It makes the fact more poignant by telling what will result, even before stating what will lead to this intended outcome.

Israel is promised that a dread and fear of them will affect the nations under the “whole heavens” (the word is plural in the Hebrew). Some scholars take this as hyperbole, but what occurs here still applies today.

God’s covenant with Israel, their campaign for the land of promise – both outside and within the borders of Canaan – and their continued existence, literally permeates the entire world. Just because the event recorded here occurred thousands of years ago, it doesn’t mean that it has any less value than it did then.

Rather, because the history of Israel is recorded, and because the covenant of God with them is contained within their historical record (meaning Scripture), this word – in fact – has gone out to all nations under the whole heavens. It is both geographically and temporally a true statement to all...

25 (con’t) who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

v’ragezu v’khalu mipanekha – “and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.” The first word, *ragaz*, was used in Exodus 15 after Israel had passed through the Red Sea –

“The people will hear *and be afraid*;
Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.” Exodus 15:14

The second word is *khul*. It signifies to whirl or dance, and thus by implication to writhe. It is used when waiting because there is this sense of anxiety or writhing when one waits. It is used also when a woman gives birth. There is travail and pain in the process. One can then think of the nations whirling and writhing as if waiting in anguish for a terrible outcome.

The idea, then, is that Israel is the Lord's possession. It is through Israel that the Lord is glorified. Those who are in fear of Israel are so because they understand that it is the Lord who accomplishes His feats through them.

So, it is logical to ask – “As recorded in the Bible, did all of the nations tremble because of Israel?” No. What about in their history and even today? Do all of the nations tremble because of Israel? No. And so, is this a failed statement?

The answer is “No.” It obviously speaks of those people and nations who understand that Israel is the Lord's possession, and who accept that the Lord is God. This is the purpose of keeping Israel for all these millennia. Eventually, the nations will come to understand not only that the Lord is Israel's God, but that the Lord is God. This is what is referred to in Ezekiel –

“And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD,” says the Lord GOD, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.” Ezekiel 36:23

Here in Deuteronomy, the Lord says He will “begin” this process. In Ezekiel, it speaks of a time when the Lord will continue this process – something that is happening in our lifetime. Someday, the completion of this process will be realized, and all of the world will see that not only is the Lord Israel's God, but that the Lord is, in fact, God. With that understood, the details of how this is to come about are now set to be reviewed...

*I have given you the victory, and the battle is won
All you need to do is to engage the enemy
The outcome is assured, and the fight is done
Just step forward in faith, and this you will see*

The fear of you will be upon all who hear

*And none shall be able to stand against you
Whether the enemy is afar or near
Just step forward in faith; it's all you need to do*

*The victory is assured because of Jesus My Son
In Him, the battle is won; surely the battle is through
Trust in Him and the fight is done
Just step forward in faith; it's all you need to do*

II. A Hardened Spirit and an Obstinate Heart (verse 26-37)

The words now go from those of the Lord to those of Moses. He will fill in the details concerning what the Lord had just spoken.

²⁶ “And I sent messengers

In Numbers 21:21 it says, “And Israel sent messengers.” That was the narrative form of the account. Moses is now recounting it from his perspective. As the leader, he directed messengers to go forth...

²⁶ (con't) from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,

The “Wilderness of Kedemoth” has never been mentioned before. The name comes from *qedem*, or east. However, *qedem* also speaks of that which is before, because the sun rises in the east. Therefore, the location means “Ancient Times,” “Antiquity,” or “Beginnings.”

It is from this newly stated location that Moses sent messengers to Sihon. And with them they carried words of peace. Israel has already been told to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan. That was stated explicitly in Numbers 33 –

“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ⁵² then you shall drive out all the

inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; ⁵³ you shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess.” Numbers 33:51-53

Sihon is not in Canaan, and therefore he was exempt from this directive. Therefore, Moses’ messengers extended words of peace from him, just as they were extended to the descendants of Esau and of Lot. Therefore, the fate of Sihon will be his own fault. For now, Moses’ words of peace are...

²⁷ ‘Let me pass through your land;

The words are identical to Numbers 21:22. Israel had asked because Moses had asked. He petitioned the king through his messengers to simply pass through the land, but with the following guarantees...

²⁷ (con’t) I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left.

In Numbers 21, it said “we.” Here it is spoken in the first person, “I will keep,” and “I will turn.” Moses gave his personal guarantee on behalf of the people. Further, he gives a strong emphasis by saying, *baderek baderek elek* – “by the way, by the way, I will walk.” He further defines that as, *lo asur yamin u-semol* – “no I will turn right and left.”

Sihon is given the same strong sureties that were given to Edom, as was stated in Numbers 20 –

“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; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.” Numbers 20:17

At that time, however, Edom refused passage to Israel, and so Israel turned and took another route. Eventually, as we will see, some of those in Edom did allow them a certain amount of passage through their land. For now, and with Sihon, Moses continues...

²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot,

The offer is the same as that for Edom. The offer is to pay with silver for anything that is eaten or for any water that they obtain from wells or springs. They further note that they are passing through on foot. In this, there is no mobilized army. Any animals would be led, not ridden on. The sureties are that there will be peace and complete compliance with the stated words.

²⁹ just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me,

The words here appear contradictory to both the earlier record in Numbers concerning Edom, and also a later note concerning Moab. First, after their petition to Edom, the response from the king of Edom was –

“You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword.” Numbers 20:18

Also, later in Deuteronomy, we will read this concerning Moab –

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 23:3, 4

The first thing to consider is that this is a continuing narrative, and the second statement is contained in the same book that the verse we are looking at now is in. It would be ridiculous to think that

Moses would write one thing and then to contradict himself with his own words.

To resolve this, we can note first that the words here do not specifically apply to traveling through Edom, which was denied by them, but rather to the willingness of Edom and Moab to sell food and water to them as Israel traveled around their borders.

Secondly, in regard to Moab, the word Moses uses in Deuteronomy 23 is *qadam*. It signifies to come before or to meet. It would imply a hospitable meeting. The descendants of Lot may have been willing to allow Israel to skirt their borders, and they may have even sold them food and water for silver, but they did not voluntarily tend to their needs.

As their forefathers, Abraham and Lot, were related by blood, this was an especially unfriendly act. Thus, Moses codified it into the law that they should not be allowed into the assembly of the Lord for their lack of fraternal care for Israel.

And finally, Moses' words here do not mention the king of any of these peoples. He simply notes that the people of the land sold them food and drink. Therefore, there is no contradiction in what Moses says now to anything which, at first, appears contradictory elsewhere. Understanding that, he now says...

29 (con't) until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

Moses is obviously speaking for Israel, and not merely of himself. He already knows that he will not pass over Jordan and into Canaan. Therefore, his words – though in the first person – are spoken of concerning Israel collectively.

Despite this, the words are actually a continued note of surety to Sihon. If the Lord their God is giving them the land west of the Jordan, and as Sihon is east of the Jordan, then the Lord has not granted Sihon's land to Israel. The words are actually a careful note of security for Sihon to consider. Despite these guarantees...

³⁰ “But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through,

The word here is different than that used in Numbers 21. There it said that Sihon would not *nathan*, or “give,” passage to Israel. Here it says he is not *abah*, or willing, to allow passage. The change is purposeful in order to set up the next words...

³⁰ (con't) for the LORD your God hardened his spirit

Here is a verse which is similar to that of Exodus concerning Pharaoh, and which uses the same word, *qashah*, or harden –

“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.” Exodus 7:3

The word signifies to be hard, harsh, or severe. Moses says that the Lord made his spirit hard. But further...

³⁰ (con't) and made his heart obstinate,

The word here is *amets*. It signifies to be strong, bold, and courageous. It is the same word used later by Moses when he tells Israel to be strong and courageous. Likewise, the Lord says the same thing to Joshua to encourage him once Moses dies.

Rather than saying his heart is obstinate, I would say something like “strengthened,” or “encouraged.” The obvious question to consider, just as with Pharaoh in Exodus, is, “Did the Lord actively

harden his spirit and encourage his heart, meaning purposefully override Sihon's nature and thus bring the change about?"

The answer is, "No." Sihon saw how Israel had traveled around Edom and Moab, not through them. Thus, it was obvious that they had not granted access to Israel through their lands. Sihon would have seen the passivity of Israel in this, and so he assumed they were unable to fight in such a battle. The same is true with Ammon as was seen in verse 2:19.

The trek to Canaan could have been immensely shorter if they had gone through their lands, but they didn't. Therefore, Sihon's spirit was passively hardened, and his heart was passively encouraged. Further, as an Amorite, he was kin to the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan.

Therefore, his spirit would have been hardened against Israel because of this as well. The very fact that Moses said to him that it was "the land which the Lord our God is giving us," would bring exactly the opposite effect that it was supposedly intended to.

"We don't want your land, because Canaan is given to us," became in Sihon's mind, "The land the Lord our God is giving us is the land that the Amorite's gods will be expelled from." The hardening was passive, and yet it was completely effective. This is so...

30 (con't) that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day.

The word is *l'maan*. We simply say, "so" or "that," but it signifies "to an end purpose." The process of doing the things that have been done was purposeful. Nothing was left to chance, and Sihon's reaction to it was assured. And yet, and despite this, Sihon is solely to blame for what occurred. Based on this...

³¹ “And the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you.’

The Lord, having directed all things to meet a determined outcome, now states that outcome which has been derived from His divine causality. “I have begun to give” signifies that it is done. The initiation of the process has begun, and the hardening and the encouraging have met their intended goal. Therefore...

³¹ (con’t) Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.’

As in verse 24, it is an imperative. “You are to take this action.” However, in verse 24, it shows how it will come about. In this verse, the stated outcome is given. This is seen by putting the two side by side –

Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle.

Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.

The same word, *yarash*, is used in both verses, but it is repeated in the second one. It speaks of inheritance. In other words, one could say, “Begin to inherit *it*, that you may inherit his land.” The battle is merely a steppingstone on a path that leads to a guaranteed outcome. Because the land is an inheritance, it belongs to Israel.

³² Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz.

The name, Jahaz, or *yahatz*, comes from a root meaning “to stamp.” Thus, it signifies, “Trodden Down.” The name of the place is probably derived from what occurred during the battle. At this location, the Amorites were trodden down, and thus Israel gave the location its name as a memorial of what occurred.

It is Sihon who initiates the action. Israel has not moved from the wilderness, as is seen from the Numbers account –

“But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.” Numbers 21:23

Israel had peacefully petitioned Sihon, and they had remained encamped at their place of petition. Therefore, Sihon is to blame for the aggression, and any land lost in battle, by default, will belong to Israel. And the outcome is...

³³ And the LORD our God delivered him over to us;

The Lord is given the credit as the principal cause. He is ultimately responsible for the victory, and without Him, the victory would not have come about. Sihon was delivered to Israel by the Lord so that Israel could accomplish the Lord’s purposes, as is next stated...

³³ (con’t) so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people.

Israel is the instrumental cause of Sihon’s defeat. Because the Lord delivered him, so Israel was enabled to defeat him. And the victory was complete. As it says, “him, his sons, and all his people.”

At times in the Hebrew, there is a difference between the written text and that which is read. This is the case here. The written text says, “his son.” That margin note, however, says, “his sons.” Either way, whether one son or more died in the battle, even if he had more sons it makes no real difference. This is because...

³⁴ We took all his cities at that time,

Verse 31 said that “Sihon and all his people came out against us.” The implication is “all the fighting men.” In doing this, he left open the possibility of total defeat. In such a case, there would be no battle-capable men to defend the cities. Thus, Israel would have

been able to take all of the cities with relative ease. Sihon's overconfidence left his people in a very bad state...

³⁴ (con't) and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining.

The word translated as “utterly destroyed” is *kharam*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to devote to religious uses. In such a case, it signifies a devotion to God, meaning that nothing would be spared, but all would be devoted to the Lord. In this, the implication is that the slaying of these people is by divine direction.

As He is the judge of all souls, and as all things belong to Him, what Israel does here with the extermination of even who we would call “innocents” in a regular war, cannot be considered either murder or some type of war crime.

As the Lord is God, and because Israel is the Lord's arm of judgment, their actions are wholly acceptable. But this cannot be said in any other scenario. As there is only one God, then all other gods are false. Thus, the actions of those who randomly take innocent life cannot be condoned, even while the actions of Israel – as directed by the Lord, cannot be condemned.

Despite the mandate for *kharam* of the people, however, the cities were not destroyed. And more...

³⁵ We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took.

The act of *kharam*, at times, extends to all things, including the livestock and the spoil of the cities. This is the case, for example, with Jericho. Nothing was to be taken from it. This is true at other times, such as with the Amalekites as is recorded in 1 Samuel 15.

The decision was the Lord's, and each instance is based upon His will, not the desires of the people. Therefore, the act of *kharam* is as much a test of obedience to Israel as it is a point of authority of the Lord over Israel. Israel devoted to the Lord that which the Lord determined to be devoted, and they were also provided for from their battles according to the decision of the Lord.

³⁶ From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead,

Aroer means "Stripped," "Bare," or "Naked." It is noted as being on the bank of the Arnon. It rested on the north bank of the Arnon River. The next boundary is noted as a city in the ravine. That is probably Ar of Moab which is noted in Numbers 21:15.

By naming Aroer and not naming Ar, it is showing that Aroer at least partially belonged to Israel, while Ar, though forming a border, still belonged to Moab. The middle of the river itself, however, is the border between the two lands. From that border, all of the land was taken "as far as Gilead."

In the Hebrew, there is an article before Gilead. It says, "the Gilead," and thus it surely speaks of Mount Gilead. The name Gilead means "Perpetual Fountain." All of the land and all of the cities within the land were taken. As it says...

³⁶ (con't) there was not one city too strong for us;

Here is a new word, *sagav*. It comes from a primitive root meaning "to be lofty," and thus inaccessible. Therefore, it is better translated as "not one city was too high for us." We could paraphrase that by saying, "No city was out of our reach."

It is this word that brought to mind the text verse today where Paul spoke of “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.” Moses is rejoicing in his words over a physical conflict that took place. Paul’s words rejoice over the spiritual equivalent which we face as believers.

Both are obstacles on the road to the Land of Promise, and both are only defeated in one way. For the church today, and for Israel of the past that is...

³⁶ (con’t) the LORD our God delivered all to us.

Though we are given weapons of war – be they physical or spiritual – apart from God, there can be no victory. But with Him, all strongholds will be cast down, and every high thing is brought low. It is He who ultimately delivers the enemy and grants His people the victory.

*³⁷ (fin) Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

The Jabbok, or *yaboq*, means “Pouring Out.” It is the designated border of the land. In this, is another note of obedience by Israel. They refrained from securing any land that belonged to Ammon, the descendants of Lot. Here it says, “along the River Jabbok.”

The Jabbok was the border between the two lands, and so Israel stopped at that point. However, in Joshua 13, it will say this concerning the inheritance of land given to Gad –

“Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which *is* before Rabbah.” Joshua 13:25

This land comes into dispute in Judges 11. However, that was land which was won in battle by Sihon. When Israel defeated Sihon, that land became a part of Israel's possession. Ammon lost their claim to it when it was lost to Sihon.

Everything else which still belonged to Ammon at that time was left to them as the Lord commanded as was all other land prohibited by the Lord. The borders remained set by the Lord alone.

*The spoil is yours with the battle over and done
The enemy is destroyed, and you can now rest
You trusted in Christ Jesus, My precious Son
You had faith in Him, and you passed the test*

*In this battle, you have the victory
And the spoil is there, waiting for you
The rewards of heaven are yours, heaped up aplenty
Because you trusted in Jesus who is Faithful and True*

*Great are You, O God! And greatly are You to be praised
We honor You for all You have done
With hearts of joy and voices loudly raised
We worship You through Christ Jesus Your Son*

III. Prophetic Pictures

The subject of Sihon has already been presented in Numbers 21. There, it was seen that he prefigured the antichrist. His name means Warrior, something identified with the antichrist. He is here called the king of Heshbon, or Intelligence.

His destruction here in a physical battle is equated to what Paul says of such things in a spiritual sense in 1 Corinthians –

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’” 1 Corinthians 1:18, 19 (NIV)

The antichrist is the king of that which is opposed to God. There is the wisdom of God and there is that which is opposed to Him, meaning false wisdom.

The first notable thing is that Moses sent his message from Kedemoth, or “Ancient Times.” That is reflective of the word of the Lord, issuing forth from eternity itself. The Lord uses *qedem*, the root of Qedemoth in this manner in Isaiah –

Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure.’” Isaiah 46:9, 10

It is a note of surety that what the Lord has ordained will come to pass. As we saw, despite it being a request for passage through the land, the request was actually the means of hardening Sihon’s heart to effect the purposes of the Lord. That is exactly what has been purposed for the antichrist from the very beginning.

And so, Israel proposes to go through his land to the Land of Promise, exactly what will happen in Israel’s future. But that is denied by him. However, as we saw, the Lord purposed for this to come about. The spirit of the antichrist, and thus the antichrist, must be destroyed, and the Lord purposed that it will come to pass.

As we saw in Numbers, and is repeated here, the place of the battle is at Jahaz which means Trodden Down. This is what will happen to Jerusalem as is noted in Revelation 19. The holy city will be trodden underfoot.

However, Israel will prevail in the end and they will take possession of Sihon's land. What belonged to the antichrist and his master, the devil, is regained for Israel. At that time, it says that they have inherited the land from the Aroer on the Arnon to the Jabbok and even as far as the Gilead.

Aroer, means "Stripped," "Bare," or "Naked." That is referring to the state of all things before the Lord –

"For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account." Hebrews 4:12, 13

Arnon comes from *ranan*, which signifies to give a jubilant, ringing cry, and thus rejoicing. The *yaboq*, or Jabbok, means, "Pouring out." There is a pouring out of God's favor – love, grace, mercy and the like – even the Holy Spirit – on Israel. But there is also a pouring out of God's wrath on the antichrist.

And Gilead, or Perpetual Fountain, speaks of the state of Israel from that point on. They will have the Perpetual Fountain of God flowing forth for them, from that time on.

The narrative today is both in line with the account in Numbers 21, and it also expands on it, adding in new details through new names and places. It is a note of confirmation that God's promises to Israel will not fail, and though they must face this foe in the end times, the Lord will be with them, bring them through what is coming, and bring them to the place that He promised their fathers thousands of years before.

The faithfulness of God to Israel is the surest sign of the faithfulness of God to us in Christ. He made a covenant with Israel which he has never forsaken, and which He will never forsake.

And, in the giving of the New Covenant in Christ, the same reliable surety is found for us. God can be trusted to follow through with His promises, even when we fall short. Have confidence in this, and trust that what God has promised in Christ will be brought to its happy conclusion.

Closing Verse: “Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
⁴Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:3, 4

Next Week: Deuteronomy 3:1-11 *Another foe, another battle, someone to whoop up on...* (The Defeat of Og King of Bashan) (9th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon

“Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon
Look, I have given into your hand
Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land
Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle, his defeat will be grand

This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you
Upon the nations under the whole heaven, so I shall do
Who shall hear the report of you
And shall tremble and be in anguish because of you

And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth
To Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying

Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road
And I will turn neither to the right nor to the left, so I was relaying

You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat
And give me water for money, that I may drink
Only let me pass through on foot
That's my proposition, what do you think?

Just as the descendants of Esau
Who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me
Until I cross the Jordan to the land
Which the LORD our God is giving us, this is my plea

“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through
For the LORD your God his spirit hardened like clay
And made his heart obstinate
That He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day

“And the LORD said to me
See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you
Begin to possess it
That you may inherit his land, so you shall do

Then Sihon and all his people came out
Against us to fight at Jahaz, this he did do
And the LORD our God delivered him over to us
So we defeated him, his sons, and all his people too

We took all his cities at that time
And we utterly destroyed (the victory we were gaining)
The men, women, and little ones of every city
We left none remaining

We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves
With the spoil of the cities which we took
From Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon
And from the city that is in the ravine; that is in the brook

As far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us
The LORD our God delivered all to us, we had no fuss

Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—
Anywhere along the River Jabbok, you did not tread
Or to the cities of the mountains
Or wherever had forbidden us the LORD our God

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

²⁴““Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle. 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.’

²⁶“And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, ²⁷ ‘Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will

turn neither to the right nor to the left. ²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, ²⁹ just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.’

³⁰ “But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day.

³¹ “And the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.’ ³² Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. ³³ And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. ³⁴ We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. ³⁵ We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. ³⁶ From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us. ³⁷ Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.