

Numbers 21 Commentary

PREVIOUS [Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission](#)

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
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At Sinai Mt Sinai			To Moab Mt Hor			At Moab Mt Nebo		
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A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: Moses								

Numbers 21:1 When the [Canaanite](#), the king of [Arad](#), who lived in the [Negev](#), heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive.

BGT Numbers 21:1 κα κουσεν Χανανις βασιλε ς Αραδ κατοικ ν κατ τ ν ρημον λθεν γ ρ Ισραηλ δ ν Αθαριν κα πολ μησεν πρ ς Ισραηλ κα κατεπρον μευσαν ξ α τ ν α χμαλωσ αν

NET Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite king of Arad who lived in the Negev heard that Israel was approaching along the road to Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoner.

NLT Numbers 21:1 The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that the Israelites were approaching on the road through Atharim. So he attacked the Israelites and took some of them as prisoners.

ESV Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.

NIV Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them.

KJV Numbers 21:1 And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners.

YLT Numbers 21:1 And the Canaanite -- king Arad -- dwelling in the south, heareth that Israel hath come the way of the Atharim, and he fighteth against Israel, and taketh some of them captive.

LXE Numbers 21:1 And Arad the Chananitish king who dwelt by the wilderness, heard that Israel came by the

way of Atharin; and he made war on Israel, and carried off some of them captives.

ASV Numbers 21:1 And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the South, heard tell that Israel came by the way of Atharim; and he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.

CSB Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming on the Atharim road, he fought against Israel and captured some prisoners.

NKJ Numbers 21:1 The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.

NRS Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them captive.

NAB Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb, heard that the Israelites were coming along the way of Atharim, he engaged them in battle and took some of them captive.

NJB Numbers 21:1 The king of Arad, the Canaanite living in the Negeb, learned that Israel was coming by way of Atharim. He attacked Israel and took some prisoners.

GWN Numbers 21:1 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that the Israelites were coming on the road to Atharim, he fought them and took some of them as prisoners.

- **Arad:** Nu 33:40 Jos 12:14 Jud 1:16
- **by the way of Atharim,** Nu 13:21,22 14:45
- **then:** De 2:32 Jos 7:5 11:19,20 Ps 44:3,4

Summary of Numbers 21 -

- Nu 21:1-3 - Israel Victorious over Arad
- Nu 21:4-9 - Deadly Serpents, Divine Solution
- Nu 21:10-20 - Israel Approaches Moab
- Nu 21:21-35 - Israel's Victory Over Sihon and Og



Negev South
Click to Enlarge

THE BATTLES BEGIN

Rod Mattoon - We now open the curtains on one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. It is like a spot light that points out the path ahead or a light house that provides direction to struggling ships on a stormy, dark night at sea. This chapter has Jesus Christ all over it. In fact, we will see that our Lord Himself refers to the events of this chapter to explain His mission on earth and proclaim one of the most powerful, popular verses in the Bible.... John 3:16.

Irving Jensen - When God promised to give the land of Canaan to His people, He did not say that this land of rest and plenty would come to them without battle or trial. There would be battles, but He would give victory.

From Mt Hor to Arad - click to enlarge
(Source: NIVSB)

When - In Nu 20:22 we last read of Israel at Mount Hor where Aaron dies transferring the priesthood to Eleazar. In the larger context, Israel is in essence back to where they were in Numbers 13-14 as they approach the promised land.

The Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim- The word **Negev** means south and you can see the general location by clicking the map above (or [on this map](#)).

Arad - ISBE - A city mentioned four times in the Old Testament. In the King James Version it is twice mistakenly rendered as the name of a king (Numbers 21:1; Numbers 33:40). Three times it is spoken of as in the South Country, one mention using the phrase 'the wilderness of Judah which is in the South Country of Arad' (Judges 1:16), that is, the part of the wilderness of Judah which is in the South Country near Arad. It was situated near the frontier of Judah and Simeon, being grouped with Debir, Hormah, Makkedah, etc. (Joshua 12:14). Arad and other cities joined in attacking Israel in the fortieth year of the sojourn in the wilderness (Numbers 21:1-3), and Israel vowed to "make their cities a devoted thing." In the case of Zephath, one of the cities, this vow was fulfilled after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:17). The Kenite relatives of Moses had their inheritance near Arad (Judges 1:16). In the form a-ru-da the city is mentioned by Shishak of Egypt as among the places which he conquered in Palestine. The identification of the site with Tel Arad, about 17 miles South of Hebron, seems to be generally accepted.

Then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive - There is no note on whether any of the Israelites died or how many, just that some were taken alive. The Septuagint translates took captive with **aichmalosia** (cf [aichmalotizo](#)) which describes a state of captivity.

FSB - Kidnapping was treated as a capital offense, just as individual kidnapping was considered a capital offense for Israelites according to the law (Exod 21:16; Deut 24:7).

Archaeology Note related to Arad - House of God Ostrakon: [Ostraca—writings on pottery](#)—are common finds in archeological digs. The House of God Ostrakon was found in **Arad**, a Canaanite city in the Negev. Over 100 pieces of ostraca were found and have been dated to the early part of the 6th Century BC. Of significance are the references to the temple in Jerusalem and to names of people that are recorded in Scripture. This not only helps to date the temple, but it verifies the existence of people listed in the biblical text.

Took captive (07628) (**shebi** from **sabah** = to take captive) means captivity, captives, usually describes those captured in war and taken back to the victorious country. **TWOT** says "This masculine noun, used forty-seven times in the OT, in at least three out of every four appearances indicates "captivity." That is, it speaks of the situation wherein people and/or animals (e.g. horses in Amos 4:10) are taken prisoner by a hostile military or para-military group, and with this comes a subsequent loss of freedom, various deprivations, and sufferings, and usually an enforced removal from their homes to a place of the captors' choosing, often to a foreign country. Sometimes shebî refers to "captives" or prisoners" as a body, e.g. Numbers 21:1, "King Arad . . . took some of them prisoners." In 721 b.c. the northern kingdom was scattered by Assyria, and in successive waves in 606, 597 and 586 b.c. Babylon took the southern kingdom Judah, into captivity. Thus Jeremiah bewails that the children of the daughter of Zion "are gone into captivity." Yet this weeping prophet sees beyond and gives God's promise to Israel that someday he would save Israel "from the land of their captivity" and "none shall make him afraid" (Jeremiah 30:10)."

Shebi - 60x in 57v - captive(16), captives(10), captivity(32), captured(2) - Ex 12:29; Nu 21:1; Nu 24:22; Nu 31:12; Nu 31:19; Nu 31:26; Dt. 21:10; Dt. 21:13; Dt. 28:41; Jdg. 5:12; 1 Sa 30:2; 1 Sa 30:3; 1 Sa 30:5; 1 Ki. 8:46; 1 Ki. 8:47; 1 Ki. 8:48; 1 Ki. 8:50; 2 Ki. 5:2; 2 Ki. 6:22; 2 Chr. 6:37; 2 Chr. 6:38; 2 Chr. 28:17; 2 Chr. 29:9; Ezr. 2:1; Ezr. 3:8; Ezr. 8:35; Ezr. 9:7; Neh. 1:2; Neh. 1:3; Neh. 7:6; Neh. 8:17; Ps. 68:18; Ps. 78:61; Isa. 20:4; Isa. 46:2; Isa. 49:24; Isa. 49:25; Isa. 52:2; Jer. 15:2; Jer. 20:6; Jer. 22:22; Jer. 30:10; Jer. 30:16; Jer. 43:11; Jer. 46:27; Jer. 48:46; Lam. 1:5; Lam. 1:18; Ezek. 12:11; Ezek. 30:17; Ezek. 30:18; Dan. 11:8; Dan. 11:33; Amos 4:10; Amos 9:4; Nah. 3:10; Hab. 1:9

Related Resource:

- David M. Gunn "[The "Battle Report": Oral or Scribal Convention?](#) *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 93, No. 4 (Dec., 1974),
- American Tract Society [Arad](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Arad](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Arad](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Arad](#) - One town is referred to in the Bible during the time of Moses, and another was inhabited during the period of the monarchy. Both are located in the dry, semi-desert region known as the Negeb in the southern extreme of Judah's territory. The Arad of Numbers 21:1-3 (probably Tel Malhata) was a Canaanite city about eleven miles west southwest of Beersheba. Its king attacked the Israelites as they were moving on to Canaan after the wilderness wandering. He was successful temporarily, taking captives; but after vowing to God that they would destroy the city, Israel struck back effectively and renamed the devastated city Hormah. Victory over this king is recorded in Joshua 12:14 . Subsequently the Kenites settled in Arad near the tribe of Judah (Judges 1:16-17).
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Arad](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Arad](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Arad](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Arad](#)

Numbers 21:2 So Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."

BGT Numbers 21:2 κα η ξατο Ισραηλ ε χ ν κυρ κα ε πεν ν μοι παραδ ς τ ν λα ν το τον ποχε ριον ναθεματι α τ ν κα τ ς π λεις α το

NET Numbers 21:2 So Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed deliver this people into our hand, then we will utterly destroy their cities."

NLT Numbers 21:2 Then the people of Israel made this vow to the LORD: "If you will hand these people over to us, we will completely destroy all their towns."

ESV Numbers 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed give this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities to destruction."

NIV Numbers 21:2 Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities."

KJV Numbers 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

YLT Numbers 21:2 And Israel voweth a vow to Jehovah, and saith, 'If Thou dost certainly give this people into my hand, then I have devoted their cities;'

LXE Numbers 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow to the Lord, and said, If thou wilt deliver this people into my power, I will devote it and its cities to thee.

ASV Numbers 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

CSB Numbers 21:2 Then Israel made a vow to the LORD, "If You will deliver this people into our hands, we will completely destroy their cities."

NKJ Numbers 21:2 So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."

NRS Numbers 21:2 Then Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed give this people into our hands, then we will utterly destroy their towns."

NAB Numbers 21:2 Israel then made this vow to the LORD: "If you deliver this people into my hand, I will doom their cities."

NJB Numbers 21:2 Israel then made this vow to Yahweh, 'If you deliver this people into my power, I shall curse their towns with destruction.'

GWN Numbers 21:2 Then the Israelites made this vow to the LORD: "If you will hand these people over to us, we'll destroy their cities because you've claimed them."

- **made a vow:** Ge 28:20 Jdg 11:30 1Sa 1:11 2Sa 15:7,8 Ps 56:12,13 116:18 Ps 132:2
- **I will:** Lev 27:28,29 De 13:15 Jos 6:17,26 1Co 16:22

LEARNING TO LEAN ON THE STRONG ARM OF THE LORD

So Israel made a vow (Lit "vowed a vow") **to the LORD** - Israel recognizes Yahweh as their Deliverer which is surprising considering all the episodes of unbelief regarding His ability to provide sustenance for them. Presumably the fact that they were not victorious but actually lost some men to captivity awakened them to the truth that God was their Warrior. Some 40 years earlier God had given Israel victory over the Amalekites, and they may have recalled this truth which prompted them to call on His Name.

NET NOTE - On the surface this does not sound like much of a vow. But the key is in the use of the verb for "utterly destroy"—חָרַם (kharam). Whatever was put to this "ban" or "devotion" belonged to God, either for his use, or for destruction. The oath was in fact saying that they would take nothing from this for themselves. It would simply be the removal of what was alien to the faith, or to

God's program.

And said, "If You will indeed (surely) deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities -

Utterly destroy (destroy completely, devote)(02763)(charam) to destroy, to doom, to devote. This word is most commonly associated with the Israelites destroying the Canaanites upon their entry into the Promised Land (Deut. 7:2; Josh. 11:20). Surrendering something irrevocably to God = devoting to service of God, excluding it from use or abuse of man &/or putting it under a ban for utter destruction. [Dt 7:2, 20:17] Usually haram meant a ban for utter destruction, compulsory dedication of thing impeding or resisting God's work which is considered to be accursed before God. Thus the basic idea = setting something aside strictly for God's use. Whatever was set aside was considered most holy by God & could not be sold or redeemed by any substitutionary measure. Once invoked it was absolutely compulsory. - Exod. 22:20; Lev. 27:28; Lev. 27:29; Num. 21:2; Num. 21:3; Deut. 2:34; Deut. 3:6; Deut. 7:2; Deut. 13:15; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 6:21; Jos. 8:26; Jos. 10:1; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:35; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:11; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 11:21; Jdg. 1:17; Jdg. 21:11; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 15:8; 1 Sam. 15:9; 1 Sam. 15:15; 1 Sam. 15:18; 1 Sam. 15:20; 1 Ki. 9:21; 2 Ki. 19:11; 1 Chr. 4:41; 2 Chr. 20:23; 2 Chr. 32:14; Ezr. 10:8; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 34:2; Isa. 37:11; Jer. 25:9; Jer. 50:21; Jer. 50:26; Jer. 51:3; Dan. 11:44; Mic. 4:13

Numbers 21:3 The LORD heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Hormah.

BGT Numbers 21:3 κα ε σκουσεν κ ριος τ ς φων ς Ισραηλ κα παρ δωκεν τ ν Χανανιν ποχε ριον α το κα νεθεμπισεν α τ ν κα τ ς π λεις α το κα πεκ λεσαν τ νομα το τ που κε νου ν θεμα

NET Numbers 21:3 The LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of the place was called Hormah.

NLT Numbers 21:3 The LORD heard the Israelites' request and gave them victory over the Canaanites. The Israelites completely destroyed them and their towns, and the place has been called Hormah ever since.

ESV Numbers 21:3 And the LORD heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction. So the name of the place was called Hormah.

NIV Numbers 21:3 The LORD listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.

KJV Numbers 21:3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

YLT Numbers 21:3 and Jehovah hearkeneth to the voice of Israel, and giveth up the Canaanite, and he devoteth them and their cities, and calleth the name of the place Hormah.

LXE Numbers 21:3 And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered the Chananite into his power; and Israel devoted him and his cities, and they called the name of that place Anathema.

ASV Numbers 21:3 And Jehovah hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and the name of the place was called Hormah.

CSB Numbers 21:3 The LORD listened to Israel's request, the Canaanites were defeated, and Israel completely destroyed them and their cities. So they named the place Hormah.

NKJ Numbers 21:3 And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.

NRS Numbers 21:3 The LORD listened to the voice of Israel, and handed over the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their towns; so the place was called Hormah.

NAB Numbers 21:3 Later, when the LORD heeded Israel's prayer and delivered up the Canaanites, they doomed them and their cities. Hence that place was named Hormah.

NJB Numbers 21:3 Yahweh heard Israel's words and delivered the Canaanites into their power, and they destroyed them in accordance with their curse. Hence the place was given the name Hormah.

GWN Numbers 21:3 The LORD listened to the Israelites and handed the Canaanites over to them. They

destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. So they called the place Hormah Claimed for Destruction.

- **The LORD heard:** Ps 10:17 91:15 102:17
- **they utterly:** LXX. [[anathematizo](#)] "and they anathematized, or devoted them to destruction;" Jos 12:14
- **the name:** Nu 14:45 De 1:44 1Sa 30:30 {Hormah,} that is, utter destruction. {Chormah,} rather a devoting to destruction: so LXX. [Anathema,] and Tremellius, {devotio sive anathema.}

YAHWEH HEARD THEIR PRAYERS

The LORD heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites- God gave them into their hands, which in Lxx is paradidomi meaning to hand over, to give over to the power of another.

then they utterly destroyed them and their cities - Utterly destroyed is devoted to destruction. The Septuagint translates with the verb [anathematizo](#) (used 13x - Nu 18:14; Nu 21:2; Nu 21:3; Dt. 13:15; Dt. 20:17; Jos. 6:21; Jdg 1:17; Jdg 21:11; 1 Sa. 15:3; 2 Ki. 19:11; 1 Chr 4:41; Ezr. 10:8; Da 11:44) which means to invoke a curse on oneself; bind by a solemn vow. Israel had vowed to destroy the enemy, to devote them to destruction.

Utterly destroyed (destroy completely, devote)([02763](#)) see above on [charam](#)

Jensen - The experience had three salutary effects: (1) in one sense it was a retaliation by Israel-in-belief for a defeat against Israel-in-unbelief (14:45); (2) it was an encouraging token by God of His favor toward Israel now in their pursuit of Canaan; (3) it would circulate a reputation of strength for Israel among the Canaanites in preparation for the future battles of Joshua against those nations. (EvBC-Nu)

Thus the name of the place was called Hormah- As so often seen in the OT, the name is described in the passage. Thus **Hormah** means something like devoted to destruction and is derived from the verb [charam](#) which means to utterly destroy. This is the second time this name is found in Numbers, the first mention being in connection occurring after the ten spies brought an evil report causing God to judge that they would not enter the promised land. The stubborn Israelites persisted even though warned by Moses (Nu 14:43). Moses records the fulfillment of his own "prophecy" writing "But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as **Hormah**." (Nu 14:44-45) So here the name Hormah was turned from a place of defeat to a place of victory. And what was the difference in the two "Hormahs?" The first they failed to call on the LORD, but the second they call on the LORD to deliver the enemy.

THOUGHT - Is there not a message for all of us in our lives -- we have a trial, an adverse situation, an enemy. We can choose to confront the situation in our power or in dependence of His power. In short, we need to lay down our pride and CRY OUT!

Numbers 21:4 Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey.

BGT Numbers 21:4 κα π ραντες ξ Ωρ το ρους δ ν π θ λασσαν ρυθρ ν περιεκ κλωσαν γ ν Εδωμ κα λιγοψ χησεν λα ς ν τ δ

NET Numbers 21:4 Then they traveled from Mount Hor by the road to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became impatient along the way.

NLT Numbers 21:4 Then the people of Israel set out from Mount Hor, taking the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom. But the people grew impatient with the long journey,

ESV Numbers 21:4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way.

NIV Numbers 21:4 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way;

KJV Numbers 21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

YLT Numbers 21:4 And they journey from mount Hor, the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom,

and the soul of the people is short in the way,

LXE Numbers 21:4 And having departed from mount Or by the way leading to the Red Sea, they compassed the land of Edom, and the people lost courage by the way.

ASV Numbers 21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

CSB Numbers 21:4 Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to bypass the land of Edom, but the people became impatient because of the journey.

NKJ Numbers 21:4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.

NRS Numbers 21:4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.

NAB Numbers 21:4 From Mount Hor they set out on the Red Sea road, to bypass the land of Edom. But with their patience worn out by the journey,

NJB Numbers 21:4 They left Mount Hor by the road to the Sea of Suph, to skirt round Edom. On the way the people lost patience.

GWN Numbers 21:4 Then they moved from Mount Hor, following the road that goes to the Red Sea, in order to get around Edom. The people became impatient on the trip

- mount Hor: Nu 20:22-27 33:41
- by the way: Nu 14:25 De 1:40
- compass: Nu 20:18-21 De 2:5-8 Jud 11:18
- the soul: Nu 32:7,9 Ex 6:9 Ac 14:22 1Th 3:3,4
- discouraged: or, grieved, Heb. shortened, Ex 6:9
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

FROM PLACE OF VICTORY TO PLACE OF DEATH!

Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea- The nation is last described at Mount Hor in Numbers 20:22ff+ where Aaron died.

NET Note - The "**Red Sea**" is the general designation for the bodies of water on either side of the Sinai peninsula, even though they are technically gulfs from the Red Sea.

To go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient (Literally - "the soul of the people was short") **because of the journey** - Going through Edom would have shortened the journey significantly but the king of Edom refused (Nu 20:14-21+). But God had another plan - His promise to Israel to enter the Promised Land would be fulfilled. Once again we see that God allows Israel to come into an adverse situation, to test their hearts. Deuteronomy gives us a good summary of Yahweh's use of testing situations of His people

Deuteronomy 8:3 "You shall remember all **the way** which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that (PURPOSE) He might **humble** you, **testing** you, to **know what was in your heart**, whether you would **keep His commandments or not**

THOUGHT - God sends/allows tests in our lives to either strengthen our faith or to show us that our faith is in need of strengthening and this teaching is only received by a humble heart, never by a heart filled with pride. As James says "**Humble** ([aorist imperative](#) passive voice - allow yourselves to be humbled) yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (Jas 4:10+, cf James 1:25+)

Impatient (07114)(**qatsar**) has two basic meanings, shorten and reap, the one intended in Nu 21:4 meaning to be short or to shorten, and figuratively describes the "souls" of these people as "shortened," and this impatient. The Septuagint translates Nu 21:4 with the verb **oligopsuchoo** [oligos = small, little + psuche = soul, mind] which means to be faint heart or discouraged (not in NT, but in Lxx 7x = Nu 21:4; Jdg 8:4, 10:16, 16:16; Ps 77:3; Jon 4:8; Hab 2:13). **Qatsar** also describes something as not too short (Nu 11:23 "is the LORD'S power **limited**" or "short"?). In Pr 10:27 **qatsar** refers to shortening of time declaring "the years of the wicked **will be shortened**."

Qatsar also has the meaning of to reap, to harvest. It describes harvesting, gathering in a crop (Lev. 19:9; 23:10; 1 Sam. 6:13; 8:12). Its participial form qôšêr refers to a reaper (Jer. 9:22; Amos 9:13). It is used in a figurative sense of reaping the fruits of righteousness (Hos. 10:12); of evil (Hos. 8:7). Psalm 126:5 records the famous phrase that they who sow in tears, reap in joy. (Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

Qatsar - 15x in 14v meaning to shorten - annoyed(1), became impatient(1), could bear(1), impatient(3), limited(1), no longer(1), short(3), shortened(3), smaller(1). Num. 11:23; Num. 21:4; Jdg. 10:16; Jdg. 16:16; Job 21:4; Ps. 89:45; Ps. 102:23; Prov. 10:27; Isa. 28:20; Isa. 50:2; Isa. 59:1; Ezek. 42:5; Mic. 2:7; Zech. 11:8

Qatsar - 34x in 32v meaning "to reap" - harvest(2), harvests(1), reap(18), reaped(2), reaper(3), reapers(7), reaping(1).= Lev. 19:9; Lev. 23:10; Lev. 23:22; Lev. 25:5; Lev. 25:11; Deut. 24:19; Ruth 2:3; Ruth 2:4; Ruth 2:5; Ruth 2:6; Ruth 2:7; Ruth 2:9; Ruth 2:14; 1 Sam. 6:13; 1 Sam. 8:12; 2 Ki. 4:18; 2 Ki. 19:29; Job 4:8; Job 24:6; Ps. 126:5; Ps. 129:7; Prov. 22:8; Eccl. 11:4; Isa. 17:5; Isa. 37:30; Jer. 9:22; Jer. 12:13; Hos. 8:7; Hos. 10:12; Hos. 10:13; Amos 9:13; Mic. 6:15

Numbers 21:5 The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food."

BGT Numbers 21:5 κα καταλειλας προς τιν θε εν κατα Μωυση λγοντες να τ ξγαγεσ μς ξ Α γ ππου ποκτη ναι μς ντ ρμ τι οκ σπιν ρτος ο δ ὄωρ ὀ ψυχ μν προσ χθισεν ντ ρτ τ διακ ν

NET Numbers 21:5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread or water, and we detest this worthless food."

NLT Numbers 21:5 and they began to speak against God and Moses. "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness?" they complained. "There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!"

ESV Numbers 21:5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food."

NIV Numbers 21:5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

KJV Numbers 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

YLT Numbers 21:5 and the people speak against God, and against Moses, 'Why hast thou brought us up out of Egypt to die in a wilderness? for there is no bread, and there is no water, and our soul hath been weary of this light bread.'

LXE Numbers 21:5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, saying, Why is this? Hast thou brought us ought of Egypt to slay us in the wilderness? for there is not bread nor water; and our soul loathes this light bread.

ASV Numbers 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

CSB Numbers 21:5 The people spoke against God and Moses: "Why have you led us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food!"

NKJ Numbers 21:5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

NRS Numbers 21:5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

NAB Numbers 21:5 the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt

to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!"

NJB Numbers 21:5 They spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the desert? For there is neither food nor water here; we are sick of this meagre diet."

GWN Numbers 21:5 and criticized God and Moses. They said, "Why did you make us leave Egypt-just to let us die in the desert? There's no bread or water, and we can't stand this awful food!"

- **The people spoke against God:** Nu 11:1-6 Nu 14:1-4 Nu 16:13,14,41 Nu 17:12 Ex 14:11 Ex 15:24 Ex 16:2,3,7,8 Ex 17:2,3 Ps 68:6 78:19
- and our soul: Nu 11:6-9 Ex 16:15,31 Ps 78:24,25 Pr 27:7
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SPEAKING AGAINST GOD IN CONTEMPT OF HIS PROVISION!

The people spoke against God and Moses - This is the same song the first generation "sang"! (See Nu 11:1-6+, Nu 14:1-4+, Nu 16:13,14,41 +, Nu 17:12+) What is interesting here is that this is the first time in the Bible that these exact words are found **'against God.'** (Job 34:37 - actually an older book so this would be the "first.")

THOUGHT - It is ironic that the jealous Jews of Acts 6:11+ slandered Stephen a man "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5+) with similar slanderous accusations "We have heard him speak blasphemous words **against Moses** and **against God.**" If you are a sincere, serious follower of Christ, do not be surprised when the people (in the congregation as they were here in Numbers) speak against you! They spoke against Jesus and He left us "an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21+), "while being reviled, **He did not revile in return**; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:23+).

HCSB writes "For the seventh time, the people spoke against God and Moses. Their words were the same monotonous complaint about food and water. (HCSB Study Bible)

While the event described in Psalm 78 is an earlier rebellion by the first generation of Israel against God, the description is very similar here in Numbers where most of the Israelites are now the second generation. Asaph writes

He brought forth streams also from the rock And caused waters to run down like rivers. Yet they still continued to sin against Him, To rebel against the Most High in the desert. 18 And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire. 19 **Then they spoke against God;** They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? 20 "Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, And streams were overflowing; Can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?" 21 Therefore the LORD heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel, 22 Because they did not believe in God And did not trust in His salvation. (Ps 78:16-22+)

Spurgeon on Psalm 78:19 - From this verse we learn that unbelief of God is a slander against him. **Then they spoke against God.** But how? The answer is, **They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"** To question the ability of One Who is manifestly Almighty, is to speak against Him. These people were base enough to say that although their God had given them bread and water, yet He could not properly order or furnish a table. He could give them coarse food, but could not prepare a feast properly arranged, so they were ungrateful enough to declare. (ED: NOTE THEIR WORDS IN Nu 21:5 - **we loathe this miserable food**) As if the manna was a mere makeshift, and the flowing rock stream a temporary expedient, they ask to have a regularly furnished table, such as they had been accustomed to in Egypt. **Alas, how have we also quarrelled with our mercies, and querulously pined for some imaginary good, counting our actual enjoyments to be nothing because they did not happen to be exactly conformed to our foolish fancies. They who will not be content will speak against providence even when it daily loadeth them with benefits.** (Lord deliver us by the supernatural power of Your Spirit from speaking against You in thought, word or deed. In Jesus' Name. Amen).

After all their experience, they doubted the divine omnipotence, as if it were to be regarded as nothing, when it refused to gratify their lusts. Unbelief is so deeply rooted in the human heart, that when God performs miracles on *earth*, unbelief doubts whether he can perform them in *heaven*, and when he does them in *heaven*, whether he can do them on *earth*? *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Here they go again with these memories of and comparison to Egypt. They clearly had forgotten the horrible bondage and mistreatment in Egypt. And they had forgotten that they were in the wilderness because of their own unbelief. And yes with the older generation it was true that they would die in the wilderness. But most of the Israelites alive at this time were second generation who would soon leave the wilderness and enter the promised land. Regardless of whether they were first or second generation, neither God or Moses was to blame for their circumstances! They had only to look in the mirror to see who was to blame. Fallen flesh does not like to accept the consequences of its sinful choices, but always seeks to pass the blame. Are we not all at times like these stubborn, rebellious Israelites? (That is a rhetorical question) As someone once taught me, Israel is a sad but very real picture of our fallen flesh. Watch how Israel behaves and you have an illustration of how your fallen flesh will behave! Paul alludes to this important principle in 1 Cor 10:6,11

"Now these things happened **as examples** for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved....Now these things happened to them **as an example**, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

For (term of explanation) **there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food** - The Septuagint is vivid for it says there is "absolutely no bread (Heb = [lechem](#); Lxx = [artos](#)) and no water!" Note that they were not starving and they did have "manna bread"! So their explanation is outlandish and hardly supports that were doomed to death in the desert! Note how they even judge themselves as liars saying they have **no food**, and then saying they have **miserable food**. They had **food**. They did not like their **food**! And Who provided this food, manna from Heaven? And were they ever without manna from Heaven? No, because God provided it every morning for 40 years and there was no cost for the food! Here they call Heaven's provision "**miserable**" the Hebrew word qeloqel (only OT use from [qalal](#) = slight, trifling) meaning contemptible, worthless! Amazing ingratitude! So it is not a matter of no food, but is more about their lack of an attitude of gratitude which in turn festered into discontent which led to grumbling and murmuring, in this case actually "biting the hand" that fed them! The Hebrew for **loathe** (see [qut](#)) is translated in the Lxx with [prosochthizo](#) which means to be very upset over something someone has done, to be angry, offended or provoked. Ironically this same verb describing Yahweh's reaction to the people in Hebrews 3:10+ and Hebrews 3:17+!

THOUGHT - It is not unusual in Scripture, or in our own lives, to have a story of defeat follow quickly on a story of victory. And here we have two contrasting stories side-by-side, which show that while progress was being made toward dependence on the Lord (THEY HAD JUST CRIED OUT FOR YAHWEH'S HELP - Nu 21:2), they still had a long way to go! On the heels of Israel's great victory over the Canaanites in Nu 21:3, they "fall on their own swords" so to speak concerning the issues of food and water. We learn from these juxtaposed stories to be very wary of our fallen flesh rising up after we have experienced a "victory" of one type or another. As Jesus commanded we need to continually "**Keep watching** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **praying** ([present imperative](#)) hat you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt 26:41+). Have you recently experienced a spiritual victory or a "spiritual high?" Then the watchword for you is LOOK OUT! BEWARE! WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY!

Loathe (dread)([06973](#))([qut](#)) means to be or make disgusted, to loathe, to be sick of. It denotes deep emotional reaction of issuing in a desired repulsion (or destruction) of the object abhorred. Quts refers to God's revulsion toward pagan practices (Lev. 20:23); by Israel toward manna (ungratefully and wrongly) after eating it for years (Nu 21:5; cf. Ps. 78:22-25); by Rebekah toward her Hittite daughters-in-law (Gen. 27:46); and by Solomon's son toward the Lord's rebuke (Pr. 3:11). It also signified the loathing felt by enemies toward Israel's prosperity (Ex. 1:12; Num. 22:3). In Isaiah 7:6, the causative sense means to vex. By taking over, the enemies planned to cause Judah to abhor them.

Numbers 21:6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

BGT Numbers 21:6 κα π σπειλεν κ ριος ε ς τ ν λα ν το ς φεις το ς θανατο ντας κα δακνον τ ν λα ν κα π θανεν λα ς πολ ς τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ

NET Numbers 21:6 So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit the people; many people of Israel died.

NLT Numbers 21:6 So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died.

ESV Numbers 21:6 Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

NIV Numbers 21:6 Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many

Israelites died.

KJV Numbers 21:6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

YLT Numbers 21:6 And Jehovah sendeth among the people the burning serpents, and they bite the people, and much people of Israel die;

LXE Numbers 21:6 And the Lord sent among the people deadly serpents, and they bit the people, and much people of the children of Israel died.

ASV Numbers 21:6 And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

CSB Numbers 21:6 Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died.

NKJ Numbers 21:6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

NRS Numbers 21:6 Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

NAB Numbers 21:6 In punishment the LORD sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died.

NJB Numbers 21:6 At this, God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel.

GWN Numbers 21:6 So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people. They bit the people, and many of the Israelites died.

- Ge 3:14,15 De 8:15 Isa 14:29 30:6 Jer 8:17 Am 9:3,4 1Co 10:9
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 8:15 "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.

JEHOVAH SENDS FIERY SERPENTS

The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people - Notice that this time God did not even give Moses a warning so that he might intercede before the punishment as he had done previously. God's judgment is immediate and it is frightening as almost everyone hates even the sight of snakes. And these were not garden snakes but deadly vipers. One is reminded of Paul's words that "the wages of sin are death," (Ro 6:23+) and that could not be more dramatically illustrated then in this divine judgment.

Fiery ([08314](#))(**saraph**) is masculine noun meaning a serpent. This word generally refers to a poisonous snake, deriving its origin from the burning sensation of the serpent's bite (see Dt. 8:15). It is used specifically of the fiery serpents that were sent as judgment. They were referred to as "flying serpents" in Isa. 14:29 and Isa. 30:6. **FSB** has an interesting note that "**Saraph** occurs in Isa 14:29; 30:6, where the serpent is described as "flying." The serpents referred to did not fly through the air; rather, the description comes from its appearance. The snake was likely a type of cobra whose upper body skin flanges were possibly thought to look like "wings.""

Saraph with meaning of **serpent** - 5x fiery(1), fiery serpents(2), serpent(2). Nu 21:6; Nu 21:8; Dt. 8:15; Isa. 14:29; Isa. 30:6

There are 2 other uses of **saraph** which refer to the **Seraphim**, the majestic beings with 6 wings, human hands or voices in attendance upon God and described in Isaiah 6:2, 6. **R L Harrison** points out that "Rather than the noun being interpreted from the word **saraph** "serpent" it should be related to the parent root of both words "fire." ([08313](#) - saraph). These angelic beings were brilliant as flaming fire, symbolic of the purity and power of the heavenly court.

[Holman Bible Dictionary](#) on **Seraphim** - Literally, “the burning ones,” seraphim (a plural word) were winged serpents whose images decorated many of the thrones of the Egyptian pharaohs. In some cases, they wore the crowns of the Egyptian kingdoms and were thought to act as guardians over the king. Israel adopted the symbolism for God's throne. Isaiah envisioned the seraphim as agents of God who prepared him to proclaim the Lord's message to Judah (Isaiah 6:2).

Related Resources:

- [What are seraphim? Are seraphs angels? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Seraph, Seraphim](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Seraphim](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Seraphim](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Seraphim](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Seraphim](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Seraphim](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Seraphim](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Seraphim](#)

Serpents (05175) see notes above [nahas/nachash](#)

NET NOTE - The designation of the serpents/ snakes is נִשְׁרָפִים (nékhashim), which is similar to the word for “bronze” (נְחֹשֶׁת, nékhoshet). This has led some scholars to describe the serpents as bronze.

And they bit the people, so that(term of purpose) **many people of Israel died** - It would be easy to read by this passage too fast (especially those of us who do not like snakes), but we need to ponder the situation in the camp. Snakes are slithering about the camp, crawling into tents, etc. For those who were not yet bitten, imagine the sense of overwhelming fear that begin to descend on the million plus assembly, not knowing whether they were about to be bitten. And if this event lasted more than a day, how could one possibly even sleep given the fear of being bitten and dying while asleep? So the picture is one of ongoing fear and fatalities.

Numbers 21:7 So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people.

BGT Numbers 21:7 κα παραγεν μενος λα ς πρ ς Μωυσ ν λεγον τι μ ρτομεν τι κατελαλ σαμεν κατ το κυρ ου κα κατ σο ε ξαι ο ν πρ ς κ ριον κα φελ τω φ μ ν τ ν φιν κα η ξατο Μωυσ ς πρ ς κ ριον περ το λαο

NET Numbers 21:7 Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD that he would take away the snakes from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

NLT Numbers 21:7 Then the people came to Moses and cried out, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take away the snakes." So Moses prayed for the people.

ESV Numbers 21:7 And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

NIV Numbers 21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

KJV Numbers 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

YLT Numbers 21:7 and the people come in unto Moses and say, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, and He doth turn aside from us the serpent;' and Moses prayeth in behalf of the people.

LXE Numbers 21:7 And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray therefore to the Lord, and let him take away the serpent from us.

ASV Numbers 21:7 And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

CSB Numbers 21:7 The people then came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you. Intercede with the LORD so that He will take the snakes away from us." And Moses interceded for the people.

NKJ Numbers 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

NRS Numbers 21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

NAB Numbers 21:7 Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people,

NJB Numbers 21:7 The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by speaking against Yahweh and against you. Intercede for us with Yahweh to save us from these serpents.' Moses interceded for the people,

GWN Numbers 21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we criticized the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD so that he will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

- **We have sinned:** Ex 9:27,28 1Sa 12:19 15:24,30 Ps 78:34 Mt 27:4
- pray: Ex 8:8,28 1Ki 13:6 Jer 37:3 Ac 8:24 Jas 5:16
- And Moses: Nu 11:2 14:17-20 Ge 20:7 Ex 32:11,30 De 9:20,26-29 1Sa 12:20-23 Job 42:8,10 Ps 106:23 Jer 15:1 Ro 10:1
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN PROMPT CONFESSION OF SIN

So (term of conclusion) **the people came to Moses** - The result of the serpentine judgment was to awaken the people to the reality of their sin. Has this ever happened to you? You sin, the Lord disciplines you and you recognize that you have sinned against the holiness of God.

And said, "We have sinned because we have spoken against the LORD and you- Those that were not yet bitten, came to their senses and confessed their sin and they even got the order correct -- all sin is first and foremost against God, even when it is against about person such as Moses in this case. The **Septuagint** rendering of **have spoken against** is more vivid for it uses the verb [katalaleo](#) which literally means to speak evil against, to express hostility in one's speaking, to slander another, to revile another, in this case the perfect Holy God!

As an aside this is the second time in Numbers we read the words "**we have sinned.**" The first time was from the lips of Aaron, who confessed his and his sister Miriam's sin (Nu 12:11+) when they challenged Moses' leadership which of course was a challenge of God's authority (read Nu 12:1-11+). His divine judgment on Miriam was immediate but at least was not fatal, although it was shameful because leprosy meant she must remain outside of the camp lest she defile other Israelites.

On the occasion of expressing their unbelief regarding entrance into the promised land God decreed He would smite the entire nation, but after Moses (again) interceded, He reduced the punishment to prohibition to enter the promised land and death in the desert over the next 40 years (Nu 14:11-35+). God then killed the 10 spies who had made all the congregation grumble (Nu 14:36-37+). When the people heard God's verdict and saw the death of the 10 spies, they seem at first to come to their senses and cried "**we have indeed sinned.**" (Nu 14:40+) And yet their confession was without repentance and they willfully tried to go into the promised land only to be defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites (Nu 14:43-45+, cf Dt 1:41). In sum, their confession that they had sinned was not sincere. In contrast, here in Numbers 21, it does appear the people made a sincere confession and God provided a way of escape.

Phrase **we have sinned** (these are interesting to read in context) - 21 verses - Nu 12:11; Nu 21:7; Dt. 1:41; Jdg. 10:10; Jdg. 10:15; 1 Sa 7:6; 1 Sa 12:10; 1 Ki. 8:47; 2 Chr. 6:37; Neh. 1:6; Ps. 106:6; Isa. 42:24; Jer. 3:25; Jer. 8:14; Jer. 14:7; Jer. 14:20; Lam. 5:16; Da 9:5; Da 9:8; Da 9:11; Da 9:15 (Da 9 = one of the most incredible prayers in Scripture).

Against the LORD (these passages make an interesting study)- Gen. 13:13; Exod. 10:16; Exod. 16:7; Exod.

16:8; Lev. 6:2; Num. 5:6; Num. 14:9; Num. 16:11; Num. 21:7; Num. 26:9; Num. 27:3; Num. 31:16; Num. 32:23; Deut. 1:41; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:16; Deut. 9:24; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 20:18; Deut. 31:27; Jos. 7:20; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:18; Jos. 22:19; Jos. 22:22; Jos. 22:29; Jos. 22:31; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Sam. 7:6; 1 Sam. 12:23; 1 Sam. 14:33; 1 Sam. 14:34; 2 Sam. 12:13; 2 Ki. 17:7; 2 Ki. 17:9; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 13:12; 2 Chr. 28:10; 2 Chr. 28:13; 2 Chr. 32:16; Ps. 2:2; Prov. 19:3; Prov. 21:30; Isa. 3:8; Isa. 32:6; Jer. 3:13; Jer. 3:25; Jer. 8:14; Jer. 16:10; Jer. 28:16; Jer. 29:32; Jer. 40:3; Jer. 44:23; Jer. 50:7; Jer. 50:14; Jer. 50:29; Dan. 5:23; Hos. 5:7; Nah. 1:9; Nah. 1:11; Zeph. 1:17; Acts 4:26

Sinned (verb) ([02398](#))(**chata'**) means to miss the way, to fail; to err, to swerve from truth, to go wrong. The literal use describes an accurate shot by slingshot Jdg 20:16 - they could "**not miss** (chata')." Pr 19:2 conveys a related meaning of chata' in those versions that translate it as "miss the way." (Pr 19:2NIV) As Vine says "From this basic meaning comes the word's chief usage to indicate moral failure toward both God and men, and certain results of such wrongs." When man sins he has missed the mark, the goal, or the way that God has set as standard. In an ironic use, the intensive (Piel) stem can mean "purified" or "to de-sin" and to cleanse (Ex 29:36, David's request of God to purify him - Ps 51:7, Lxx = [rhantizo](#) = to sprinkle, figuratively = inward cleansing = "hearts sprinkled" - Heb 10:22; cf purify in Nu 8:21; 19:12,13, 20; 31:19, 20, 23). **Chata** can describe sin against another man (Ge 20:9), but most often describes sin against God, as in the first use (Ge 20:6). In a classic use by Joseph in the context of Potiphar's wife tempting him he declared "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil, and **sin** against (Lxx = [enantios](#) = opposite, over against, opposed to, hostile toward) God?" (Ge 39:9)

Chata is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) by the verb [hamartano](#) which literally means to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). **Hamartano** means to act contrary to the will and law of God. To commit a wrong. To be in error. **Hamartano** means to err (err is from Latin **errare** = to wander or to stray!) which means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct. To err is to miss the right way. To err means to deviate from the path or line of duty. To stray by design or mistake. To err is to stray from God and/or His commandments. **Hamartano** means to swerve from the truth, to turn aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth. To swerve means to wander from any line prescribed, or from a rule of duty; to depart from what is established by law, duty or custom. In short **hamartano** means to miss the mark of God's perfect standard.

THOUGHT - O, that God would grant us the grace to continually remember the perpetual principle that all sin is ultimately against God, and in so remembering, be strengthened to resist times of temptation and quick to confess when we do sin against Him! In Jesus' forgiving Name. Amen.

Intercede with the LORD that He may remove the serpents from us- Israel has kicked against the authority of Moses, but now they are at the "end of their rope" and humble themselves before him. There is an old Motown song "Ain't to proud to beg," which might have been Israel's theme song in light of invasion of venomous vipers. And so the people specifically asked for Jehovah to remove the serpents which clearly acknowledged that they knew Who had sent the serpents as agents of death. As noted in the following passages, Moses responds and Yahweh answers, but not according to the specific request of the people. He did not remove the fiery serpents.

Ps 106:43-45[±] Many times He would deliver them; They, however, were rebellious in their counsel, And so sank down in their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless He looked upon their distress When He heard their cry; 45 And He remembered His covenant for their sake, And relented according to the greatness of His lovingkindness.

Spurgeon - Notwithstanding all these provoking rebellions and detestable enormities the Lord still heard their prayer and pitied them. This is very wonderful, very godlike. One would have thought that the Lord would have shut out their prayer, seeing they had shut their ears against his admonitions; but no, he had a father's heart, and a sight of their sorrows touched his soul, the sound of their cries overcame his heart, and he looked upon them with compassion. His fiercest wrath towards his own people is only a temporary flame, but his love burns on for ever like the light of his own immortality. **And he remembered for them his covenant.** The covenant is the sure foundation of mercy, and when the whole fabric of outward grace manifested in the saints lies in ruins this is the fundamental basis of love which is never moved, and upon it the Lord proceeds to build again a new structure of grace. Covenant mercy is sure as the throne of God. **He...relented according to the greatness of His lovingkindness.** He did not carry out the destruction which he had commenced. Speaking after the manner of men he changed his mind, and did not leave them to their enemies to be utterly cut off, because he saw that his covenant would in such a

case have been broken. The Lord is so full of grace that he has not only mercy but mercies, yea a multitude of them, and these live in the covenant and treasure up good for the erring sons of men.

And Moses interceded for the people - Once again Moses interceded with Yahweh so that the entire congregation would not die which would have occurred had the serpents continued inflicting their fatal bites. Moses does not tell us whether he prayed the specific request of the Israelites or just that the people might not die. The Septuagint translates **palal** (used of Moses praying for Aaron and Israel - Dt 9:20, 26) with the verb **euchomai** which speaks of petitionary prayer, expressing a strong desire for something (as in Ro 9:3).

This event recalls Numbers 11:2+ where "The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses **prayed (palal)** to the LORD and the fire (Nu 11:1+) died out."

THOUGHT - Repeatedly in Exodus and Numbers Moses intercedes for the people with Jehovah giving us a clear foreshadowing of our great High Priest and Intercessor Christ Jesus. Romans 8:34+ says "Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, who also **intercedes** (present tense = continually) for us.." Hebrews 7:25+ says "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to (continually - present tense) make intercession for them."

Intercede (06419)(palal) means "to pray, intervene, mediate, judge." **W E Vine** writes **palal** is "Found in both biblical and modern Hebrew, this word occurs 84 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The word is used 4 times in the intensive verbal form (**piel**); the remaining 80 times are found in the reflexive or reciprocal form (**Hithpael**), in which the action generally points back to the subject. In the intensive form **pālāl** expresses the idea of "to mediate, to come between two parties," always between human beings. Thus, "if a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him..." (1 Sa. 2:25RSV). "To mediate" requires "making a judgment," as in Ezek. 16:52: "Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters...." In the remaining 2 references in which the intensive form is used, **pālāl** expresses "making a judgment" in Ge. 48:11 and "coming between" ("Phinehas stood up and interposed,") in Ps. 106:30+. The first occurrence of **pālāl** in the Old Testament is in Ge 20:7, where the reflexive or reciprocal form of the verb expresses the idea of "interceding for, prayer in behalf of": "He shall pray for thee." Such intercessory praying is frequent in the Old Testament: **Moses** "prays" for the people's deliverance from the fiery serpents (Nu 21:7); he "prays" for Aaron Num. (Deut.9:20); and Samuel "intercedes" continually for Israel (1 Sam. 12:23). Prayer is directed not only toward Yahweh but toward pagan idols as well (Isa. 44:17). Sometimes prayer is made to Yahweh that He would act against an enemy: "That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard" (2 Kings 19:20). **Just why this verb form (Hithpael) is used to express the act of praying is not completely clear. Since this verb form (Hithpael) points back to the subject, in a reflexive sense, perhaps it emphasizes the part which the person praying has in his prayers.** Also, since the verb form can have a reciprocal meaning between subject and object, it may emphasize the fact that prayer is basically communication, which always has to be two-way in order to be real. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Baker adds that **palal** is "the most common Hebrew word used to describe the general act of prayer (Jer. 29:7). It was often used to describe prayer offered in a time of distress, such as Hannah's prayer for a son (1 Sam. 1:10, 12); Elisha's prayer for the dead boy (2 Kgs. 4:33); Hezekiah's prayer for protection and health (2 Kgs. 19:15; 20:2); and Jonah's prayer from the fish (Jon. 2:1[2]). In some contexts, this word described a specific intercession of one person praying to the Lord for another, such as Abraham for Abimelech (Gen. 20:7, 17); Moses and Samuel for Israel (Num. 11:2; 21:7; 1 Sam. 7:5); the man of God for the king (1 Kgs. 13:6); or Ezra and Daniel for Israel's sins (Ezra 10:1; Dan. 9:4, 20). This prayer of intercession could also be made to a false god (Isa. 44:17; 45:14). (CWD)

Palal - 84x in 82v - expected(1), intercede(2), interceded(1), interposed(1), made judgment favorable(1), make supplication(1), mediate(1), pray(36), prayed(28), praying(8), prays(4). Gen. 20:7; Gen. 20:17; Gen. 48:11; Num. 11:2; Num. 21:7; Deut. 9:20; Deut. 9:26; 1 Sam. 1:10; 1 Sam. 1:12; 1 Sam. 1:26; 1 Sam. 1:27; 1 Sam. 2:1; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Sam. 7:5; 1 Sam. 8:6; 1 Sam. 12:19; 1 Sam. 12:23; 2 Sam. 7:27; 1 Ki. 8:28; 1 Ki. 8:29; 1 Ki. 8:30; 1 Ki. 8:33; 1 Ki. 8:42; 1 Ki. 8:44; 1 Ki. 8:48; 1 Ki. 8:54; 1 Ki. 13:6; 2 Ki. 4:33; 2 Ki. 6:17; 2 Ki. 6:18; 2 Ki. 19:15; 2 Ki. 19:20; 2 Ki. 20:2; 1 Chr. 17:25; 2 Chr. 6:19; 2 Chr. 6:20; 2 Chr. 6:21; 2 Chr. 6:24; 2 Chr. 6:26; 2 Chr. 6:32; 2 Chr. 6:34; 2 Chr. 6:38; 2 Chr. 7:1; 2 Chr. 7:14; 2 Chr. 30:18; 2 Chr. 32:20; 2 Chr. 32:24; 2 Chr. 33:13; Ezr. 10:1; Neh. 1:4; Neh. 1:6; Neh. 2:4; Neh. 4:9; Job 42:8; Job 42:10; Ps. 5:2; Ps. 32:6; Ps. 72:15; Ps. 106:30; Isa. 16:12; Isa. 37:15; Isa. 37:21; Isa. 38:2; Isa. 44:17; Isa. 45:14; Isa. 45:20; Jer. 7:16; Jer. 11:14; Jer. 14:11; Jer. 29:7; Jer. 29:12; Jer. 32:16; Jer. 37:3; Jer. 42:2; Jer. 42:4; Jer. 42:20; Ezek. 16:52; Dan. 9:4; Dan. 9:20; Jon. 2:1; Jon. 4:2

Serpents (05175) (nahas/nachash) is a masculine noun describing a literal serpent (Ex. 4:3; Nu 21:6; Dt. 8:15; Eccl. 10:8; Amos 5:19) or the image as here in Numbers 21:9. Nachash is used figuratively - Satan as the tempter (Ge. 3:1, 2, 4, 13, 14); tribe of Dan (Ge. 49:17); wicked rulers (Ps. 58:4); and enemies (Isa. 14:29; Jer. 8:17; 46:22).

Gilbrant - *nāchāsh* is attested in Ugaritic and Middle Hebrew. *Nāchāsh* is used as a generic term that

covers over thirty species (OF SERPENTS) native to the region. In its literal sense, nāḥāšh refers to actual serpents, like the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1f, 4, 13f). When the Lord commanded Moses to cast his rod to the ground, it became an actual serpent (Exo. 4:3; 7:15). Further, the Lord sent fiery serpents to bite the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness (Num. 21:6; Deut. 8:15), and when Moses prayed that the Lord would remove them (Num. 21:7), the Lord commanded him to make a bronze serpent and hang it on a pole so the people could be healed when they looked at it (Num. 21:9). In later days, King Hezekiah destroyed this bronze serpent because the people began to worship it (2 Ki. 18:4). Jeremiah warned that the Lord will send serpents to bite false teachers (Jer. 8:17), and Amos warned that the Lord would send serpents to bite those who think they can hide from coming judgment (Amos 9:3). Agur the son of Jakeh regarded the way a serpent slithers across a rock as a great marvel (Prov. 30:19). In the messianic kingdom, the serpent will continue to eat dust (Isa. 65:25).

At times, nāḥāšh denotes celestial constellations. Job referred to one of the constellations as "the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). Isaiah associated the leviathan with the "fleeing serpent" and the "crooked serpent," a possible reference to the constellation (Isa. 27:1).

Metaphorically, the word is associated with evil and judgment. Jacob likened Dan to "a serpent by the way" when he blessed his sons (Gen. 49:17). The psalmist compared the metaphorical venom of the wicked to the poison of a serpent (Ps. 58:4), and the tongue of a violent man to that of a serpent (Ps. 140:3). Solomon likened the results of drunkenness (Prov. 23:32), the result of careless action (Ecc. 10:8) and the consequence of careless words (Ecc. 10:11) to being bitten by a serpent. In Isaiah, a serpent's venomous offspring serves as an illustration of the certainty of ultimate judgment (Isa. 14:29). Jeremiah compared the impending movement of the Babylonian troops against Egypt to the silent slithering of a serpent (Jer. 46:22), and Amos likened the consequences of an unwise desire for the Day of the Lord to being bitten by a serpent in the security of one's house (Amos 5:19). Finally, Micah likened the shame of the nations, when the Lord restores the people of Israel, to a serpent eating dust (Mic. 7:17). (The Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

TWOT has a lengthy note on **nahas/nachash** - This is the most common word for "snake."...The first five occurrences of nāḥāšh are in Gen 3 (Ge 3:1, 2, 4, 13, 14) and of course refer to the creature that tempted Eve to disobey God. Paul alludes to this incident in 2 Cor 11:3 and John in Rev 12:9ff. In all instances, including the LXX translation, the Greek word is ophis. Opinions differ as to whether this was a **satan-inspired snake** or a name for **satan himself** (J. O. Buswell. Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, I, Zondervan, 1962, pp. 264–65). Only naturalistic theology could hold that it was a mere snake referred to in myth or legend.

Nahas/nachash occurs in Ex 4:3; 7:15, in connection with Moses' rod turning to a "serpent." During the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites the Lord sent "fiery serpents." Nu 21:6, 7, 9; Dt 8:15, and 2 Kgs 18:4 refer both to the plague and the bronze "serpent" **nēḥūštan** which Moses made. Normally the "serpent" is something evil. But anyone poisoned with venom could, by looking at the bronze "serpent," be healed. Jesus alluded to this episode in John 3:14. As the object of faith resembled the curse in the case of the "snakes," so Jesus resembled the cursed in that he took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man (Phil 2:7). There are at least two more noteworthy features of this account of Moses' bronze "snake." First, the word nāḥāšh is almost identical to the word for "bronze" or "copper," Hebrew nēḥōšet (q.v.). Some scholars think the words are related because of a common color of snakes (cf. our "copperhead"), but others think that they are only coincidentally similar. From 2 Kgs 18:4 we can assume that the bronze "serpent" became a relic, a religious fetish, and that the people of God, acting like ordinary men, wanted to worship it. The name given it was "**Nehushtan**," which may refer to the words nāḥāšh (snake) and/or nēḥōšet (brass).

Both Jeremiah and Amos may be alluding to this desert incident when they threaten punishment in the form of "serpents" (Jer 8:17; Amos 5:19; 9:3). Isaiah and Micah may have Gen 3:14 in mind when they speak of licking the dust like a "serpent" (Isa 65:25; Mic 7:17). Both Job and Isaiah mention the leviathan (q.v.) or dragon or crooked "serpent" in connection with God's power (Job 26:13; Isa 27:1). Other characteristics of "snakes" receive mention. Genesis 49:17 seems to refer to a serpent's stealth; Ps 58:4, 140:3 [H 4]; Prov 23:32, Eccl 10:8, 11, Jer 8:17, Amos 5:19, and 9:3 to the poisonous bite; Prov 30:19 to their climbing ability on a smooth surface; and Jer 46:22 to the hissing sound they make. Three passages (Ps 54:4–5; Eccl 10:11; Jer 8:17) may refer to "snake" charming. Again, the word nāḥāšh is similar to the word laḥāšh (enchantment or divination) in those passages (cf. nāḥāšh). Three or four people and one city have names derived from this root: Nahaš, the king of Ammon (I Sam 11:1, et al.); Nahaš, the father of

Abigail and Zeruiah (II Sam 17:25); Nahšon, the son of Aminadab and brother-in-law of Aaron (Ex 6:23 et al.); Nehšta, the mother of king Jehoiakin (II Kgs 24:8); and the city of Nahaš (Ir-nahash in most translations, I Chr 4:12). Since there are several identical roots, these names may not necessarily mean “snake” but perhaps “diviner” (naḥaš) or “copper” (nēḥōšet).

NIDOTTE - The snake was universally feared throughout the ANE and symbolized sovereignty, life, fertility, wisdom, chaos, and death. Dating back to Chalcolithic times, snakes in Mesopotamia appeared as cultic symbols on pottery and bronze castings. In the Gilgamesh Epic the wise serpent robs the hero of a plant that could give him immortality. Egyptian pharaohs wore headgear with an erect cobra in front, signifying divine power and protection. The snake, however, is also symbolic of death and chaos, evident in Marduk's victory over the sea serpent Tiamat and Re's subjugation of the evil Apep. The Canaanites borrowed the serpent symbol from the Hyksos and used it to represent the divine power of life. OT 1. Identification. Palestine today is home to over thirty species of snakes; only six are poisonous. These species are presumed in nearly all biblical references to snakes. The “f” sound in many of the Heb. terms is likely onomatopoeic for the snake's puffing noise. The generic term is שׁוֹפָן, which appears in parallel with שׁוֹפָן (viper, Gen 49:17, NIV), פֶּתֶן (cobra, Ps 58:4 [5], NIV), אֲכַשׁוּב (viper, Ps 140:3 [4], NIV), אֲפֹעַ (viper[s], Prov 23:32; Jer 8:17, NIV), אֲפֹעַ (viper, Isa 14:29, NIV), and also refers to Leviathan, the monster (תַּיִן) of the sea (Isa 27:1). The adj. אֲפֹעַ modifies שׁוֹפָן to indicate either its reddish color or inflammatory bite (Num 21:6; Deut 8:15). Moses cast a bronze or copper (נְחָשׁ) snake, which was later named Nehushtan (Num 21:9; 2 Kgs 18:4). When אֲפֹעַ appears as a nom., it indicates either seraphs (Isa 6:2, 6), the snakes in the wilderness (Num 21:8), or some other kind of snake characterized as אֲפֹעַ (lit. flying; Isa 14:29; 30:6). The understanding of this last type as “flying serpents” rests on a report by Herodotus (3:107, 109), but the biblical description could also indicate a jab or prick, thus NIV “darting.” Ps 58:4–5 [5–6] associates the act of charming with the פֶּתֶן, likely the Egyptian cobra (also called uraeus, Naja haje). It appears in parallel with תַּיִן (serpent[s], Deut 32:33; Ps 91:13, NIV), אֲפֹעַ (adder, Job 20:16, NIV), שׁוֹפָן (snake, Ps 58:4 [5], NIV), and אֲפֹעַ (viper, Isa 11:8). The אֲפֹעַ (NIV adder) may be the deadly sand viper (Echis colorata). The hapleg. אֲכַשׁוּב appears only in Ps 140:3 [4], where it is clearly a snake (maybe the horned viper, Cerastes cornutus), though the Tg. and 11QPSa understood it as a corruption of אֲפֹעַ, spider (cf. Job 8:14; Isa 59:5). The LXX translates it with σκίς (#835), asp (cf. Rom 3:13). The NIV translates both אֲפֹעַ (and the collective, אֲפֹעַ, Isa 14:29 only) as viper. The MT's accentuation of Jer 8:17 understands אֲפֹעַ as an attributive adj. modifying שׁוֹפָן, yielding the translation “deadly snakes” (the NIV takes the words as two noms.). This creature is likely the largest and most dangerous snake in Palestine, the yellow *Vipera xanthina*. The NIV construes the hapleg. אֲפֹעַ (Isa 34:15) as a dialectical equivalent of אֲפֹעַ (owl, as in 34:11; Zeph 2:14), and indeed the passage does concern birds, though some understand the creature as the harmless arrow snake (*Eryx jaculus*) or the common tree snake (*Coluber jugularis*). The שׁוֹפָן appears only in Gen 49:17 and may be the horned viper. The vb. אֲפֹעַ usually refers to the biting of snakes but once metaphorically describes false prophets as biters, signifying the deadly effect of their appetite (Mic 3:5). In Hab 2:7 it forms a wordplay with אֲפֹעַ, interest in the financial sense.

Nachash - 29x in 26v - Ge 3:1; Ge 3:2; Ge 3:4; Ge 3:13; Gen. 3:14; Gen. 49:17; Ex. 4:3; Ex. 7:15; Num. 21:7; Num. 21:9; 2 Ki. 18:4; Job 26:13; Ps. 58:4; Ps. 140:3; Prov. 23:32; Prov. 30:19; Eccl. 10:8; Eccl. 10:11; Isa. 14:29; Isa. 27:1; Isa. 65:25; Jer. 8:17; Jer. 46:22; Amos 5:19; Amos 9:3; Mic. 7:17

Question: [What was Nehushtan?](#)

Answer: The word *Nehushtan* occurs one time in the Bible, in 2 Kings 18:4, “He [Hezekiah] removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the [bronze serpent](#) that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).”

Second Kings 18:4 points back to Numbers 21:6–9, “Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”

In the time between Moses and Hezekiah, the Israelites began worshiping the “fiery serpent” Moses made out of bronze. It is only mentioned in connection with Hezekiah's reforms, but the Nehushtan worship could have been taking place long before Hezekiah. While it is understandable how an item that brought miraculous healing could become an object of worship, it was still blatant

disobedience to God's commands (Exodus 20:4–5). The bronze serpent was God's method of deliverance during the incident recorded in Number 21. There is no indication that God intended it to ever be used again.

While He does not refer to it as "Nehushtan," Jesus does mention the bronze serpent in John 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Just as anyone who was bitten by a serpent could be healed by looking to the bronze serpent Moses lifted up, so can anyone look to Jesus, who was lifted up on the cross, to be spiritually healed, delivered, and saved.

Interestingly, the word *Nehushtan* appears to simply mean "piece of brass." Perhaps Hezekiah named it "Nehushtan" to remind people that it was only a piece of brass. It had no power in it. Even in the Numbers 21 incident, it was God who healed, not Nehushtan.

Nehushtan should be a powerful reminder to us all that even good things—and good people—can become idols in our lives. Our praise, worship, and adoration are to be directed to God alone. Nothing else, regardless of its amazing history, is worthy. GotQuestions.org

Related Resource:

- [Nehoshet: Copper, Bronze or Brass? Which are Plausible in the Tanakh?](#) - from the Jewish Bible Quarterly - interesting discussions of Solomon's "Great Bronze Sea" and the bronze snake of Numbers 21:9 fame - Nehushtan.

Numbers 21:8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live."

BGT Numbers 21:8 κα ε πεν κ ριος πρ ς Μωυσ ν πο ησον σεαυτ φιν κα θ ς α τ ν π σημει ου κα σται ν δ κ φι ς νθρωπον π ς δεδηγμ νος δ ν α τ ν ζ σεται

NET Numbers 21:8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous snake and set it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live."

NLT Numbers 21:8 Then the LORD told him, "Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at it!"

ESV Numbers 21:8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

NIV Numbers 21:8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

KJV Numbers 21:8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

YLT Numbers 21:8 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'Make for thee a burning serpent, and set it on an ensign; and it hath been, every one who is bitten and hath seen it -- he hath lived.

LXE Numbers 21:8 And Moses prayed to the Lord for the people; and the Lord said to Moses, Make thee a serpent, and put it on a signal-staff; and it shall come to pass that whenever a serpent shall bite a man, every one so bitten that looks upon it shall live.

ASV Numbers 21:8 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live.

CSB Numbers 21:8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover."

NKJ Numbers 21:8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

NRS Numbers 21:8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."

NAB Numbers 21:8 and the LORD said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover."

NJB Numbers 21:8 and Yahweh replied, 'Make a fiery serpent and raise it as a standard. Anyone who is bitten and looks at it will survive.'

GWN Numbers 21:8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake, and put it on a pole. Anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

- Ps 106:43-45 Ps 145:8
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Bronze Serpent on Standard

STARING AT A SERPENT ON A STANDARD AND SURVIVING

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard - God does not answer by removing the snakes but by potentially removing the fatal effect of the venom. The people would still be bit and feel the fiery venom begin to course forth from the bite site.

It is fascinating that the Septuagint translates **standard** ([nec/nes](#)) with the Greek noun [semeion](#) which means a distinguishing mark, which **BDAG** says is "a sign or distinguishing mark whereby something is known!" This word is found most in the Gospels (68/77 with 17 in John's Gospel) and most to describe miraculous (supernatural, divinely enabled) events (most performed by Jesus) which were intended to be a pointer (especially that God was involved in the sign) or a means of confirmation as in the Gospel of John where there were 7 (supernatural) signs by Jesus that specifically pointed to the fact the Man Jesus was also the prophesied **Christ, the Son of God!** (Jn 20:31). Clearly this OT sign points to Jesus the Savior of the world.

Standard ([05251](#))([nec/nes](#)) means a banner, an ensign, a standard, a signal pole (wood pole which was visible when raised - Nu 21:8), a signal (non-verbal communication - Nu 26:10, Jer 4:6), a sail (for a boat - Isa 33:23). **Nec/nes** served as a rallying point or standard which drew people together for some common action for or for the communication of important information. The **banner** could be an ornamental piece of cloth on the end of a staff or pole as a leader's signal. Usually the signal was placed on a high place in the camp. Here the signal pole stands for (is a metaphor if you will) the Messiah Who was raised (pun intended - cf Ro 4:25+) to give life to all who were inflicted with the eternally fatal "serpent's bite" (as all humanity was! Ro 5:12+)! Hallelujah! Amen

And it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live- Just one look is all God demanded and the person would miraculously survive the uniformly fatal venom. It seems so simple, maybe even too simple -- just look and live physically. It points to the simplicity of the Gospel -- just believe and live eternally!

FSB - In the ancient Near East, serpents were widely associated with life and healing because they shed their skin. The prescientific observance of this ability led people to assume the serpent had regenerative power. Even today, the most common insignia associated with the medical profession (ED: [caduceus](#)) contains two intertwined snakes ([picture](#)).

THOUGHT - The bite of the viper was but a faint SHADOW to remind the people of God's righteous anger against sin that resulted from the "bite" of the serpent in Genesis 3, resulting in a uniformly fatal wound to every person born in Adam. Paul writes "Therefore, just as through one man sin (ADAM) entered into the world, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men**, because all sinned." (Ro 5:12+). The fatal effect of the viper bite was symbolically propitiated in the raised up bronze serpent based which reflected God's great grace and mercy to those condemned to die. The BRONZE SERPENT was "a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." (Col 2:17+) Jesus declared "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes (COMPARE WHOEVER LOOKS TO THE BRONZE SERPENT) will in Him have eternal life." (Jn 3:14-15+) Paul adds "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Co 5:21+). In other words, our Lord Jesus Christ referred to the "bronze serpent" figuratively as a type of His own approaching death on the cross (Jn 3:14+), where he was "made sin for us" (2Co 5:21) and where He bore our sins deserving the death (1 Peter 2:24+). He died the death He did not deserve, to give us the eternal life we could never earn. Tragically what God meant for good, men took and used for evil! Fallen flesh refuses to simply look by faith to Christ lifted up on the "standard" of the Old Rugged Cross. Instead sinful men in their prideful deception make "gods" of their own vain imagination. And this is exactly what happened with the Bronze Serpent in Numbers 21, so that The bronze serpent was preserved for 730 years until Hezekiah

(715–686 BC) broke it in pieces because the people were worshipping it. In contempt he gave it the name 'Nehushtan' (a play on the word [nahas](#), 'serpent'), meaning a 'trifling thing' (a worthless piece of brass), because it had become an object of worship. (2 Kings 18:4). What should have served as a symbol of hope pointing to the coming Messiah became an object of idol worship which Hezekiah destroyed.

Henry Morris - The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:8,9) was originally a symbol of sin judged and salvation given. Once it had served its purpose, however, it should have been abandoned. Instead it eventually became an idol. This is the danger involved in too much emphasis on symbols rather than the realities they are intended to represent.

Although this is only one of at least 40 miracles during the exodus and wilderness wanderings, it is esp important as a prophecy of the coming work of Christ on the cross. Sin, symbolized by the serpent, must be put to death. This death must be appropriated in faith as his own deserved death by the sinner, if he would live. Even so, Jesus Christ was made "to be sin for us" (2Co 5:21). How many ways our merciful God has painted the picture of the "small gate & the narrow way" that lead to salvation & yet most chose the gate that is wide & the way that is broad which tragically leads to destruction (eternal death). (Mt 7:13,14+).

On a stormy winter night **C H Spurgeon** the greatest non-Biblical preacher and writer in history was saved from the "serpent's bite" by **looking!** The verse that God's Spirit used to save him was in Isaiah which in the **King James Version** says...

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.(Isaiah 45:22)

THOUGHT - This begs the question of you dear reader - have you **looked to Jesus** and to Him alone (not your "good works") for salvation from the "serpent's bite?" If not, consider the look what will change your life forever and ever just as it did Charles Haddon Spurgeon ([Read his wonderful testimony](#)). And for us who are by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+) "immunized" from the eternally fatal effects of "sin virus" inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12+), are we continually looking to Jesus, continually "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2+). And Who is coming again (soon) to take us home to be with Him forever and ever. Amen and amen!

The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible writes that typology is the "Branch of biblical interpretation in which an element found in the OT prefigures one found in the NT. The initial one is called the **type** and the fulfillment is designated the **antitype** (see Gk [antitupon](#)). Either **type** or **antitype** may be a person, thing, or event, but often the type is Messianic and frequently refers to salvation. In working with types, the safest procedure is to limit them to those expressly mentioned in the Bible (cf. 1Cor 4:6). On the other hand, it is argued that such an approach limits the legitimate use of types, for some obvious types are not mentioned in the NT. Further, the types given in the NT are examples which demonstrate how to find others in the OT. Some examples may serve to identify some biblical **types** and **antitypes**: Jesus said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (Jn 3:14; cf. Nu 21:9)"

Related Resources:

- Discussion of Biblical Typology with cautions against abuse
- [What is biblical typology? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Comments On the New Testament Use of This Picture by the Lord Jesus Himself (John 3:14-15+)...

Ryle - Christ "lifted up" and put to shame on Calvary is the ladder by which Christians "enter into the holiest," and are at length landed in glory. It is true that we are sinners;—but Christ has suffered for us. It is true that we deserve death;—but Christ has died for us. It is true that we are guilty debtors;—but Christ has paid our debts with His own blood. This is the real Gospel! This is the good news! **On this let us lean while we live. To this let us cling when we die.** Christ has been "lifted up" on the cross, and has thrown open the gates of heaven to all believers.

Carson - That bronze snake on a pole was the means God used to give new (physical) life to the children of Israel if they were bitten in the plague of snakes that had been sent in as a punishment for the persistent murmuring. By God's provision, new life was graciously granted. Why then should it be thought so strange that by the gracious provision of this same God there should be new spiritual life, indeed 'eternal life' (v. 15)?

Mattoon comparing the looking at the serpent with believing in Jesus - Each man had to look for himself. No

man could look for the benefit of another. It was not enough to know about the serpent. You had to look upon it. Each person must come to Christ in faith on the Lord's terms. You cannot get saved by another person's faith. You must personally put your faith in Christ. Knowing about the Lord is not enough to save you from your sins. This serpent on the pole was a picture of Jesus Christ.

Utley on the significance of the serpent - The central truth is that humans must trust and obey God's word, even when they do not fully understand it. God provided a way for the Israelites to be saved from the snake bites if they would only believe. This belief was evidenced by their own obedience to His word/promise.

Merrill Tenney observes that "Although Jesus did not elaborate the details of this allusion, it has several applicable aspects:

1. The ancient Israelites were guilty of disobedience and a grumbling and unthankful spirit.
2. They were under the condemnation of God and were being punished for their sin.
3. The object elevated before them was the emblem of their judgment.
4. They were unable to rescue themselves.
5. The poison of the serpents was deadly, and there was no antidote for it.
6. They were urged to look at the serpent in order to receive life. (Borrow [EBC-old edition](#))

Rob Mattoon The Brazen Serpent.... A Picture of Christ

1. The brazen serpent was made like a fiery serpent, yet, without a sting. Christ was made like unto sinful man, yet without sin.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21+—For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
 - Romans 8:3+—For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
2. The serpent was cursed in the Garden of Eden. Christ was made a curse for us, taking the sin of the world upon Himself. He identified Himself with our guilt so that we might be identified with Him in glory.
 - Galatians 3:13+—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
3. Brass in the Bible is a symbol or picture of judgment. The judgment of God was upon Jesus Christ because He bore our sins. Brass was actually copper. The red serpent was a reminder of the blood that Christ shed upon the cross.
4. As the metal passed through the furnace to be molded in the form of a serpent, the Captain of our Salvation brought deliverance through His suffering.
 - Hebrews 2:10+—For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
5. Both the serpent and Christ were lifted up as objects of faith and deliverance to those who were dying. The words "lifted up" are from the Greek word *hupsoo* {hoop-so'-o}. This word was used of being lifted up on the cross and being lifted up into glory at the time of His ascension. It means "to exalt or raise to a place of honor." The cross lifted up Christ to a place of glory.
 - John 12:23—And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.
6. The cure of the brazen serpent was unknown to reason and it was simple. All they had to do is look by faith. Salvation is simple too. The Christian life begins by looking to the Lord for salvation.
 - Isaiah 45:22—Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

We are to continue to look to the Lord all throughout our lives until the very end of it. We are to be lifting Him up or magnifying Him.

- Hebrews 12:2+—Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- Philippians 1:20+—According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

- Philippians 3:20+—For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

7. We receive eternal or everlasting life by looking to the Lord. Eternal life deals not only with the quantity of life, but the quality of life. Eternal life gives peace with God and with men. Since we are forgiven, we must be forgiving. We are to see men as God sees them. Eternal life gives us peace in this life and with ourselves. In spite of our trials or weaknesses, we face them with the Lord at our side. Let me ask, "Are you lifting up the Lord in your life?"

Salvation may come quietly, but we must not remain quiet about it.

S Lewis Johnson on [the Brazen \(Bronze\) Serpent](#)

Now one final thing we want to look at the brazen serpent, so let us read Numbers 21:4-9. Well to make it a little easier, let us begin at verse 4 through verse 9.

"And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." They are so illustrative of us but this is the last time it happens by the way.

So the people was much discouraged because of the way and the people spake against God and against Moses, "Wherefore have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread." They did not have to say this. They just turned on the record player. "Neither is there any water and our soul loatheth this light bread."

The psalmist calls it the food of angels. But they call it *light bread*, that they loathe, the manna. And so the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned." They are slow to learn. "And we have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee; pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." And Moses made a serpent of brass or copper and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Now you do not have to be told that this is something that the Lord Jesus Christ, not only read but studied because when he was talking to Nicodemus, he had made reference to it. He said this. John chapter 3:14-15+. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." So the Lord Jesus finds in this an illustration of his own saving ministry.

Now of course it is such a beautiful illustration of the Lord's work that I am not surprised that Old Testament scholars can find some further difficulty with this passage because in 2 Kings 18:4, we read in the time of Hezekiah, this copper serpent was still in existence. And so what would you think that an Old Testament professor sitting at his desk looking for something unique on which to write an article for *Novum Testamentum*, might be thinking about. Well he would be thinking I need a subject, I need a startling subject, I need a subject I can write my article on it and I will get some recognition and maybe I will get to be applauded professor of Old Testament at the university of whatever.

So why not this incident here being written, because after all, the Books of Moses were written long after the time of Moses. We all know that. Don't we? That is, we scholars. So why not this incident, being written in order to explain how that serpent was found in the day of Hezekiah? So this is the fictitious explanation of the serpent destroyed by Hezekiah. Well it does not take much reading to see that that is not true.

Now in John 3:14, we read, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." So the Lord Jesus is the authentication for this particular incident. And further, he uses it as an illustration of his own ministry. That is a striking symbolism when you think about it. Here are people who are bitten by serpents and so being bitten by a serpent, the Lord is going to provide a remedy for it and his remedy is to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole.

Now you would think that he would think of something other than a serpent, saved by a serpent. What a strange thing? Saved by a serpent! But here we have actually an incident in which if a person was bitten and if he followed the instructions, he would look off at that if it is copper, it is a reddish colored snake and in looking off at the reddish colored snake, he would be healed.

Well the analogies I think are clear when you think about it because the symbolism is a symbolism found in the Old Testament sacrificial rights. For in the Old Testament sacrificial rights, animals are slain, blood is shed in order that sinful men may be delivered from their sins. And the offerings of the Old Testament are the offerings of animal slain, blood shed in order that men who are guilty of trespass or sin or whatever may be cleansed.

So here is life from the dead. The Israelites are sinners. They have been complaining and they represent sinners. They are dying physically. But they represent sinners who die spiritually. They are delivered by a serpent. Now the serpent suggests sin of course. In fact that goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and so the serpent suggests sin.

The remedy is a supernatural remedy because a brazen serpent cannot heal. It is sufficient for all, everyone who looks is healed; it is infallible, you do not have to look twice, you have to look once. You know, do not read any one who said I looked, but I was not healed, he looked and he was. God is not treating us all fairly. It was infallible, it was enduring. In fact, this serpent existed on into the time of Hezekiah. We know it was unique. It was the only way in which you could be healed and it was personal.

I like the way that Moses is told to put this because he says in verse 9, "And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." A father could not do it for a son. A mother could not do it for a child. Your friend could not do it for you. A priest could not do it for someone else. Aaron or anybody else could not do it for anyone else but that individual person only had to respond.

I want to say just one more word about the serpent I would like to suggest to you. When the Lord Jesus used this and when he said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," he is thinking of himself as being lifted up as the penal sacrifice for a sinful man. In fact, putting in two particular texts. He hath made him to be sin for us. That is why he is pictured as a serpent. He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Or Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. So how appropriate it is. Bitten by the serpent of sin, the one who is to be the means by which we are delivered is one who in his saving work is the curse for sin, is made the penal sacrifice through substitution for sinners.

One thinks of the personal side of it and of Wesley's words as he described what happened to him in Aldersgate Street in London when he heard the prefaced Luther's commentary on the Roman's read. Among his words are these. "An assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Can you not imagine some Hebrew youngster maybe from the tribe of well Dan or Naphtali and you can imagine him moving out around the barn or whatever and suddenly one of these little snakes strikes him and he realizes that he has been bitten. He begins to feel the poison coming through and finally he is carried in to a tent and there he just awaits because he knows this has happened to others, the death, that is sure to come.

And someone hears about the brazen serpent that Moses has put on a pole and he rushes in and he says to this young Hebrew fellow from the tribe of Dan, look Moses has put a serpent on a pole and if you look to the serpent, you will live. Others have tried it and they have lived. And I can imagine him say it because he is the member of the Unitarian Church. And he will say that is so irrational.

What possible connection can there be between a serpent of brass or the pole and the fact that I am dying in this tent. You can look at my ankle here and see the swelling. What connection has a brass serpent got with this? But I have seen it happen. That I can hear him say, now if it were some kind of ointment, something that the priest would do if he would bring in some new medicine, some like some of those other churches have, some of those Mormons, they talk about salamanders and things like that. If they would bring in and if they would strike their hand over the place, I can see how there might be some connection with that.

But looking at a pole and just looking at it, why just imagine that those people that you saw healed are just some of those credulous fundamentalists. But we Unitarians and Mormons and others who are enlightened, we obviously see that there is no connection between that serpent on the pole and the fact that I am dying of the fever here now. But of course that may see irrational. It may seem strange. But it was the divine remedy.

And the gospel is the divine remedy. It is the divine remedy for sin. And we have all been bitten and the Scriptures say and our Lord is the authority, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." That whosoever is baptized shall be saved. Now whosoever believes it, as a matter of fact, anything that is more of an activity than simply looking is an obfuscation of the Gospel of the

Lord Jesus Christ. That is the remedy. The serpent on the pole and the means by which it becomes ours is the look of faith. Anything added to that is to make the Gospel other than the gospel. Aren't these marvelous incidents? Magnificent pedagogical devices to prepare Israel for the coming of him who as the serpent on the pole was and is the remedy for sin. Let us bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for these marvelous incidents from the Old Testament that so marvelously and beautifully illustrate the saving ministry of our great priestly offering, our great high priest who offered himself as Thee penal sacrifice through substitution by which the people of God are saved now and forever. We give Thee thanks for him. We pray Lord that Thou wilt by Thy grace enable us to be fruitful in the preaching of him.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

BGT Numbers 21:9 κα πο ησεν Μωυς ς φιν χαλκο ν κα στησεν α τ ν π σημε ου κα γ νετο ταν δακνεν φις νθρωπον κα π βλεψεν π τ ν φιν τ ν χαλκο ν κα ζη

NET Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole, so that if a snake had bitten someone, when he looked at the bronze snake he lived.

NLT Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed!

ESV Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

NIV Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

KJV Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

YLT Numbers 21:9 And Moses maketh a serpent of brass, and setteth it on the ensign, and it hath been, if the serpent hath bitten any man, and he hath looked expectingly unto the serpent of brass -- he hath lived.

LXE Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a signal-staff: and it came to pass that whenever a serpent bit a man, and he looked on the brazen serpent, he lived.

ASV Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.

CSB Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

NKJ Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

NRS Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

NAB Numbers 21:9 Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he recovered.

NJB Numbers 21:9 Moses then made a serpent out of bronze and raised it as a standard, and anyone who was bitten by a serpent and looked at the bronze serpent survived.

GWN Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. People looked at the bronze snake after they were bitten, and they lived.

- **serpent** of: 2Ki 18:4 Joh 3:14,15 12:32 Ro 8:3 2Co 5:21
- when he: Isa 45:22 Zec 12:10 Joh 1:29 Heb 12:2 1Jn 3:8
- he lived: Joh 6:40 Ro 1:17 5:20,21
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SIN JUDGED SALVATION GIVEN

And Moses made a bronze ([nechosheth](#)) serpent ([nahas/nachash](#)) and set it on the standard - Moses obeys without questioning what is ostensibly a somewhat unusual command by Jehovah. There is a good lesson for us today, that when God gives us a command in Scripture, one we might even consider "unusual" (e.g., Mt 5:44+), we should take the "Moses approach" and obey without question and without hesitation so that we too might experience the blessings of obedience, even as Moses was blessed to see bitten, dying Israelites remain alive! It is interesting that the first use of word for **standard** ([nec/nes](#)) was Exodus 17:15+ when Moses recorded the great Name of the LORD, "The LORD My Banner." (banner = [nec/nes](#)).

And it came about, that if a serpent ([nahas/nachash](#)) bit any man, when he looked to the bronze ([nechosheth](#)) serpent ([nahas/nachash](#)), he lived - The Word of the LORD's promise was proven true (just as it always is!) Israelites bitten with an otherwise fatal injection of venom, looked and lived! The word looked ([nabat](#)) in the Septuagint is [epiblepo](#) which means to look with favor, to gaze upon, to look intently, attentively. In other words they believed and lived. They believed what might seem implausible or even ridiculous and they lived. In the same way many who once were skeptics and laughed at a dead man coming back to life, have over the millennia come to their senses, and believed the humanly impossible and lived (Acts 16:31+).

Looked ([05027](#)) ([nabat](#)) carries the root idea of that which one does with the eye and can describe everything from a mere glance (1Sa 17:42) to a careful, sustained, and favorable contemplation (Isa 5:12; Ps 74:20; Ps 119:6, 15, Hab 1:5). Nabat speaks of physical "looking" (Ex 3:6) and (as in Ps 119:18) of figurative "looking", that is, spiritual apprehension (1Sa 16:7). The first OT use of Nabat is in Ge 15:5 where God made a promise to Abraham ("Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be.") and in Ge 15:6+ "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." So Abraham looked at the Heavens (and God's promise of a seed, the Messiah, Gal 3:16+) and then he believed.

Related Resources:

- D. J. Wiseman, "[Flying Serpents.](#)" [Tyndale Bulletin 23 \(1972\): 108–10](#)
- K. R. Joines, "[The Bronze Serpent in the Israelite Cult.](#)" [JBL 87 \(1968\): 245–56.](#)

Question: [Why is a bronze serpent used to save the Israelites in Numbers 21:8-9?](#)

Answer: Throughout the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, God was constantly teaching them things about Himself and about their own sinfulness. He brought them into the wilderness, to the same mountain where He revealed Himself to Moses, so that He could instruct them in what He required of them. Shortly after the amazing events at Mt. Sinai, God brought them to the border of the Promised Land, but when the people heard the reports from the spies, their faith failed. They said that God could not overcome the giants in the land. As a result of this unbelief, God sent them into the wilderness to wander until that generation died out (Numbers 14:28-34).

In Numbers 21, the people again got discouraged, and in their unbelief they murmured against Moses for bringing them into the wilderness. They had already forgotten that it was their own sin that caused them to be there, and they tried to blame Moses for it. As a judgment against the people for their sin, God sent poisonous serpents into the camp, and people began to die. This showed the people that they were the ones in sin, and they came to Moses to confess that sin and ask for God's mercy. When Moses prayed for the people, God instructed him to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole so the people could be healed (Numbers 21:5-7).

God was teaching the people something about faith. It is totally illogical to think that looking at a bronze image could heal anyone from snakebite, but that is exactly what God told them to do. It took an act of faith in God's plan for anyone to be healed, and the serpent on the stick was a reminder of their sin which brought about their suffering. There is no connection between this serpent and the serpent which Satan spoke through in the Garden of Eden. This serpent was symbolic of the serpents God used to chastise the people for their unbelief.

A couple of additional lessons are taught in the Bible regarding this bronze serpent. The people did get healed when they looked at the serpent, and the image was kept for many years. Many years later, when the Israelites were in the Promised Land, the serpent became an object of worship (2 Kings 18:4). This shows how easy it is for us to take the things of God and twist them into idolatry. We must never worship the tools or the people God chooses to use, but always bring the honor and glory to God alone.

The next reference we find in the Bible to this serpent is in John 3:14. Jesus indicated that this bronze serpent was a foreshadowing of Him. The serpent, a symbol of sin and judgment, was lifted up from the earth and put on a tree, which was a symbol of a curse

(Galatians 3:13). The serpent lifted up and cursed symbolized Jesus, who takes away sin from everyone who would look to Him in faith, just like the Israelites had to look to the upraised symbol in the wilderness. Paul is reminding the Galatians that Jesus became a curse for us, although He was blameless and sinless—the spotless Lamb of God. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). GotQuestions.org

Numbers 21:10 Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth.

BGT Numbers 21:10 κα π ραν ο υ ο Ισραηλ κα παρεν βαλον ν Ωβωθ

NET Numbers 21:10 The Israelites traveled on and camped in Oboth.

NLT Numbers 21:10 The Israelites traveled next to Oboth and camped there.

ESV Numbers 21:10 And the people of Israel set out and camped in Oboth.

NIV Numbers 21:10 The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth.

KJV Numbers 21:10 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth.

YLT Numbers 21:10 And the sons of Israel journey, and encamp in Oboth.

LXE Numbers 21:10 And the children of Israel departed, and encamped in Oboth.

ASV Numbers 21:10 And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in Oboth.

CSB Numbers 21:10 The Israelites set out and camped at Oboth.

NKJ Numbers 21:10 Now the children of Israel moved on and camped in Oboth.

NRS Numbers 21:10 The Israelites set out, and camped in Oboth.

NAB Numbers 21:10 The Israelites moved on and encamped in Oboth.

NJB Numbers 21:10 The Israelites set out and camped at Oboth.

GWN Numbers 21:10 The Israelites moved and set up camp at Oboth.

- Nu 33:43-45
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Beginning in Nu 20:10 and going through Nu 20:20 we have a summary of Israel's route toward the Promised Land. There is a more detailed account of their journey in Nu 33:41-49.

Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth- In light of the dramatic preceding context, this is almost an understatement. Presumably the venomous vipers did not follow them, but that would not matter, as the desert was the normal habitat of "fiery serpents and scorpions" (Dt 8:15). It follows that it is highly likely that other Israelites were bitten during this journey. And we do know that the Bronze Serpent Standard persisted (2 Ki 18:4) and therefore would have been available for anyone who was bitten.

[Holman Bible Dictionary](#) on Oboth - (oh' bahth) Place name meaning, "fathers" or "water skins." (ED: Fausset however says "Oboth means "holes dug for water") A wilderness station (Numbers 21:10-11 ; Numbers 33:43-44), perhaps identical with Ain el-Weiba near Panon (modern Feinan).

Related Resources:

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Oboth](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopeda [Oboth](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Oboth](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Oboth](#)

Numbers 21:11 They journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iyeabariam, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east.

BGT Numbers 21:11 κα ξραντες ξ Ωβωθ παρεν βαλον ν Αχελγαι κ το πραν ν τ ρ μ στιν κατ πρ σωπον Μωαβ κατ νατολ ς λ ου

NET Numbers 21:11 Then they traveled on from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim, in the wilderness that is before Moab, on the eastern side.

NLT Numbers 21:11 Then they went on to Iye-abarim, in the wilderness on the eastern border of Moab.

ESV Numbers 21:11 And they set out from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness that is opposite Moab, toward the sunrise.

NIV Numbers 21:11 Then they set out from Oboth and camped in Iye Abarim, in the desert that faces Moab toward the sunrise.

KJV Numbers 21:11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ijeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising.

YLT Numbers 21:11 And they journey from Oboth, and encamp in Ije-Abarim, in the wilderness that is on the front of Moab, at the rising of the sun.

LXE Numbers 21:11 And having departed from Oboth, they encamped in Achalgai, on the farther side in the wilderness, which is opposite Moab, toward the east.

ASV Numbers 21:11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and encamped at Iyeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising.

CSB Numbers 21:11 They set out from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim in the wilderness that borders Moab on the east.

NKJ Numbers 21:11 And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, in the wilderness which is east of Moab, toward the sunrise.

NRS Numbers 21:11 They set out from Oboth, and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness bordering Moab toward the sunrise.

NAB Numbers 21:11 Setting out from Oboth, they encamped in Iye-abarim in the desert fronting Moab on the east.

NJB Numbers 21:11 Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye-Abarim, in the desert on the eastern border of Moab.

GWN Numbers 21:11 Next they moved from Oboth and set up camp at Iye Abarim in the desert west of Moab.

- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Moab - [Arnon River](#) on North and [Wadi Zered](#) on South

FSB notes that "This section and the next (Nu 21:21–35) are not in chronological order, since the battle with the Amorites (Nu 21:21–35) would have likely been before Israel entered the Jordan Valley. As with many OT passages that list numerous locations, many of these sites are unknown.

They journeyed from ([nasa](#) - pulled up tent pegs) Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east ("the rising of the sun") - **Journeyed** is [nasa](#) means "to pull up," "to pluck out," such as pulling up the pegs of a tent when the camp moves on (Isa. 33:20) thus it lends itself naturally to the general term of "traveling" or "journeying." So here it pictures Israel as pulling up their tent stakes and moving on. **Nasa** later became a technical term meaning to break camp and move out. Considering that Numbers is a book of wandering or journeying, it is not surprising that over 100 uses of [nasa](#) are found in this book picture Israel as desert travellers, each pulling up their tent-pegs, folding their tents, and setting out with flocks and herds on the next stage of their journey. The word **wilderness (midbār)** is translated in Lxx with [eremos](#) which describes an empty or uninhabited place which is desolate.

NET NOTE - These places are uncertain. **Oboth** may be some 15 miles (25 km) from the south end of the Dead Sea at a place called 'Ain el-Weiba. Iye Abarim may be the modern Mahay at the southeastern corner of Moab. See J. Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament.

Wilderness ([04057](#)) (**midbār**) means wilderness or desert. midbār is used to describe three types of country

in general: pastureland (Joshua 2:22; Psalm 65:12 [H 13]; Jeremiah 23:10), uninhabited land (Deut. 32:10; Job 38:26; Proverbs 21:19; Jeremiah 9:1), and large areas of land in which oases or cities and towns exist here and there. The wilderness of Judah has at least a half-dozen cities in it. The wilderness of Jordan (the alluvial plain) contains cities, and the wilderness of Sinai has within it a number of oases. *midbār* is also used figuratively (Hosea 2:5; Jeremiah 2:31). The largest tracts called *midbār* are Sinai, the Negeb, the Jordan Valley, and the Arabian desert. Specific wilderness areas are: Beer-sheba (Genesis 21:14), Paran (Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12; Numbers 12:16; Numbers 13:3, 26; 1 Samuel 25:1), Sin (Exodus 16:1; Ex 17:1; Nu 33:11-12), Sinai (Numbers 1:19, etc; Exodus 19:1-2; Leviticus 7:38); Zin (Numbers 13:21 etc.; Deut. 32:51; Joshua 15:1), Bethaven (Joshua 18:12), Judah (Judges 1:16; Psalm 63 title), Ziph (1 Samuel 23:14; 1 Samuel 26:2), Maon (1 Samuel 23:24-25), Gibeon (2 Samuel 2:24), Damascus (1 Ki 19:15), Edom (2 Kings 3:8), Jeruel (2 Chron. 20:16) Shur (Exodus 15:22; Exodus 16:1; Numbers 1:19 etc.), Etham (Numbers 33:8), Kedemoth (Deut. 2:26), Tekoa (2 Chron. 20:20), Kadesh (Psalm 29:8; Psalm 63 title), and Egypt (Ezekiel 20:35). The wilderness is often described negatively as without grapes, fountains, pools of water, rivers, pleasant places—or as in a notable statement: "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Psalm 78:19). (Earl Kalland in [TWOT](#) - online)

Gilbrant - Midhbār refers to an open area of land which is sparsely populated and is generally dry in climate. The term applies to areas which are dry deserts as well as open grazing lands. The KJV, RSV and NASB usually translate this term as "wilderness" while the NIV usually uses the word "desert."

The etymology of *midhbār* is debated. It may be derived from *dāvar*, "to speak," "to drive away" (see BDB, TWOT). Such derivations do exist in Arabic, Ugaritic and a number of late Aramaic dialects.

The term is applied to areas within the tribes of Benjamin and Judah and to the land south of Israel, which today is called the Sinai Peninsula. "Desert" is a good description for the Sinai Peninsula area, while "wilderness" or "steppe" better applies to the areas within Benjamin and Judah. The term is never used for areas within the northern tribes. The area around Damascus is the only place in the north which is referred to as a wilderness, as it sits on the fringe of the Syrian Desert (1 Kings 19:15).

The Book of Joshua divides the tribe of Judah into four geographical regions. The number of cities associated with each region demonstrates that a *midhbār* is a sparsely populated area. From the region of the Negeb, which is south of Beer-Sheba, Judah acquired twenty-nine towns and villages. From the western foothills, which extended from the Mediterranean coast toward the area of Jerusalem, Judah acquired forty-two towns and villages. From the hill country, which included the area of Jerusalem and Hebron, Judah acquired thirty-eight towns and villages, but from the wilderness area, which was along the Dead Sea, Judah only acquired six towns and villages. This area is called the wilderness of Judah. It may have been this region between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea which Jesus entered to be tempted of the devil. The area between Jerusalem and Jericho is the setting of the story of the Good Samaritan.

Other terms which highlight the sense of isolation are associated with the *midhbār*. On the Day of Atonement, a designated man was to take the scapegoat into the wilderness, which in temple times would have been the Judean wilderness. This land is further described as a solitary place, *gezfirāh*. Moses described the land in which Israel wandered as a great and terrible desert with fiery serpents, scorpions and no water (Deut. 8:15). He also called it a barren and howling place (Deut. 32:12). God would judge the cities which rebelled against Him, and He would make them deserted and forsaken (Isa. 27:10) and uninhabited like the wilderness (Jer. 22:6). He would make the land of Judah like a desolate wilderness which no one passes through (Jer. 9:10ff).

The wilderness is barren in contrast to populated and fruitful lands. The Israelites repeatedly made comparisons between the land of Egypt and the wilderness in which they were traveling. Egypt was a place of service, but it was also a place of life, while the desert was a place of death (Exo. 14:11f). They described it as a place without food and water (Num. 21:5). They contrasted it with the land flowing with milk and honey (Num. 16:13). Isaiah contrasted it with a fruitful field (Isa. 32:15). When a river dries up, it becomes like a *midhbār* (Isa. 50:2). Ezekiel compared it with an open field in which scavengers roam (Ezek. 29:5). Hosea spoke of the east wind which comes across the desert and dries up the land of Israel (Hos. 13:15).

In contrast, the wilderness is sometimes associated with the pastoral lifestyle. In these passages, the wilderness does not have the negative connotations mentioned above. Moses pastured the flocks of Jethro in the wilderness (Exo. 3:1). David also pastured sheep in the wilderness (1 Sam. 17:28). It is from this more romantic view of the wilderness that the Song of Songs draws its imagery (3:6; 8:5).

Isaiah declared that God would begin the time of restoration in the wilderness. Exiled among the nations,

Israel was in the wilderness. It was there that they were to prepare the way for the Lord (Isa. 40:3). In the barren land of Israel, God would transform the wilderness and bring forth water and trees (Isa. 41:19; 43:20).

Wilderness areas are often identified with a prominent city or place within the region. The city of Kadesh stood between the wilderness of Paran to the south and the wilderness of Zin to the north. It was in these two areas that Israel spent most of their forty years (Num. 13:26; 20:1; 33:36). The wilderness of Zin also marked the southern border of Judah (Josh. 15:1).

Some of the time David was hiding from King Saul was spent in the strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph, which was a city about four miles south of Hebron, and in the wilderness of Maon, four miles further south (1 Sam. 23:14f, 25). It was in this region of southern Judah that David had his encounter with Nabal and Abigail. He also spent time in the wilderness of En-Gedi near the Dead Sea (1 Sam. 24:1). En-Gedi is within the wilderness of Judah, and the title of Ps. 63 indicates that David wrote it during his time in the Judean wilderness.

The southern border of Israel is often defined in terms of the wilderness (Exo. 23:31; Num. 34:3; Deut. 11:24). The area east of the Jordan was also defined as a wilderness (Deut. 1:1). The land Israel was entering was a land flowing with milk and honey. While Israel was in exile, they were in a type of wilderness.

There is a theological message presented in this midhbār theme. Outside of the land of Israel is death, chaos and emptiness. God was with Israel in the wilderness for forty years, and God was with Israel during the Babylonian exile. He never ceased providing for his people, but God's full provision for his people was within the land. In the land was abundance and life without slavery. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Midbar - 269x in 255v desert(11), deserts(1), wilderness(257). - Gen. 14:6; Gen. 16:7; Gen. 21:14; Gen. 21:20; Gen. 21:21; Gen. 36:24; Gen. 37:22; Exod. 3:1; Exod. 3:18; Exod. 4:27; Exod. 5:1; Exod. 5:3; Exod. 7:16; Exod. 8:27; Exod. 8:28; Exod. 13:18; Exod. 13:20; Exod. 14:3; Exod. 14:11; Exod. 14:12; Exod. 15:22; Exod. 16:1; Exod. 16:2; Exod. 16:3; Exod. 16:10; Exod. 16:14; Exod. 16:32; Exod. 17:1; Exod. 18:5; Exod. 19:1; Exod. 19:2; Exod. 23:31; Lev. 7:38; Lev. 16:10; Lev. 16:21; Lev. 16:22; Num. 1:1; Num. 1:19; Num. 3:4; Num. 3:14; Num. 9:1; Num. 9:5; Num. 10:12; Num. 10:31; Num. 12:16; Num. 13:3; Num. 13:21; Num. 13:26; Num. 14:2; Num. 14:16; Num. 14:22; Num. 14:25; Num. 14:29; Num. 14:32; Num. 14:33; Num. 14:35; Num. 15:32; Num. 16:13; Num. 20:1; Num. 20:4; Num. 21:5; Num. 21:11; Num. 21:13; Num. 21:18; Num. 21:23; Num. 24:1; Num. 26:64; Num. 26:65; Num. 27:3; Num. 27:14; Num. 32:13; Num. 32:15; Num. 33:6; Num. 33:8; Num. 33:11; Num. 33:12; Num. 33:15; Num. 33:16; Num. 33:36; Num. 34:3; Deut. 1:1; Deut. 1:19; Deut. 1:31; Deut. 1:40; Deut. 2:1; Deut. 2:7; Deut. 2:8; Deut. 2:26; Deut. 4:43; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:15; Deut. 8:16; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:28; Deut. 11:5; Deut. 11:24; Deut. 29:5; Deut. 32:10; Deut. 32:51; Jos. 1:4; Jos. 5:4; Jos. 5:5; Jos. 5:6; Jos. 8:15; Jos. 8:20; Jos. 8:24; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 14:10; Jos. 15:1; Jos. 15:61; Jos. 16:1; Jos. 18:12; Jos. 20:8; Jos. 24:7; Jdg. 1:16; Jdg. 8:7; Jdg. 8:16; Jdg. 11:16; Jdg. 11:18; Jdg. 11:22; Jdg. 20:42; Jdg. 20:45; Jdg. 20:47; 1 Sam. 4:8; 1 Sam. 13:18; 1 Sam. 17:28; 1 Sam. 23:14; 1 Sam. 23:15; 1 Sam. 23:24; 1 Sam. 23:25; 1 Sam. 24:1; 1 Sam. 25:1; 1 Sam. 25:4; 1 Sam. 25:14; 1 Sam. 25:21; 1 Sam. 26:2; 1 Sam. 26:3; 2 Sam. 2:24; 2 Sam. 15:23; 2 Sam. 15:28; 2 Sam. 16:2; 2 Sam. 17:16; 2 Sam. 17:29; 1 Ki. 2:34; 1 Ki. 9:18; 1 Ki. 19:4; 1 Ki. 19:15; 2 Ki. 3:8; 1 Chr. 5:9; 1 Chr. 6:78; 1 Chr. 12:8; 1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:3; 2 Chr. 8:4; 2 Chr. 20:16; 2 Chr. 20:20; 2 Chr. 20:24; 2 Chr. 24:9; 2 Chr. 26:10; Neh. 9:19; Neh. 9:21; Job 1:19; Job 24:5; Job 38:26; Ps. 29:8; Ps. 55:7; Ps. 65:12; Ps. 75:6; Ps. 78:15; Ps. 78:19; Ps. 78:40; Ps. 78:52; Ps. 95:8; Ps. 102:6; Ps. 106:9; Ps. 106:14; Ps. 106:26; Ps. 107:4; Ps. 107:33; Ps. 107:35; Ps. 136:16; Prov. 21:19; Cant. 3:6; Cant. 8:5; Isa. 14:17; Isa. 16:1; Isa. 16:8; Isa. 21:1; Isa. 27:10; Isa. 32:15; Isa. 32:16; Isa. 35:1; Isa. 35:6; Isa. 40:3; Isa. 41:18; Isa. 41:19; Isa. 42:11; Isa. 43:19; Isa. 43:20; Isa. 50:2; Isa. 51:3; Isa. 63:13; Isa. 64:10; Jer. 2:2; Jer. 2:6; Jer. 2:24; Jer. 2:31; Jer. 3:2; Jer. 4:11; Jer. 4:26; Jer. 9:2; Jer. 9:10; Jer. 9:12; Jer. 9:26; Jer. 12:10; Jer. 12:12; Jer. 13:24; Jer. 17:6; Jer. 22:6; Jer. 23:10; Jer. 25:24; Jer. 31:2; Jer. 48:6; Jer. 50:12; Lam. 4:3; Lam. 4:19; Lam. 5:9; Ezek. 6:14; Ezek. 19:13; Ezek. 20:10; Ezek. 20:13; Ezek. 20:15; Ezek. 20:17; Ezek. 20:18; Ezek. 20:21; Ezek. 20:23; Ezek. 20:35; Ezek. 20:36; Ezek. 23:42; Ezek. 29:5; Ezek. 34:25; Hos. 2:3; Hos. 2:14; Hos. 9:10; Hos. 13:5; Hos. 13:15; Joel 1:19; Joel 1:20; Joel 2:3; Joel 2:22; Joel 3:19; Amos 2:10; Amos 5:25; Zeph. 2:13; Mal. 1:3

Related Resources:

- Holman Bible Dictionary [Iye-Abarim](#) - (i ihē-ab' uh rihm) Place name meaning, "ruins of the crossings." Station in the wilderness wanderings (Numbers 21:11) near Moab. It is apparently near mount Abarim. See [Abarim](#) . It is apparently abbreviated as lim in Numbers 33:45 (KJV). Some Bible geographers locate it at khirbet Aii southwest of Kerak or modern Mahay, but this is far from certain.
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Iye-Abarim](#) - **IYE-ABARIM** ('lyim of the regions beyond,' distinguishing this place from the lim of Joshua 15:29). The station mentioned in Numbers 21:11 ; Numbers 33:44 (in Numbers 33:45 **lyim** alone) and described (Numbers 21:11) as 'in the wilderness which is before Moab toward the sun-rising,' and more briefly (Numbers 33:44) as 'in the border of Moab.' Nothing is known as to its position beyond these indications.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Iye-Abarim](#) - יֵי אֲבָרִים - *ī yē āb'ā - rim* (עיי העברים , *īyē hā - 'ābhārīm* , "the heaps of the Abarim"; the King James Version Iye-abarim ; in Numbers 21:11 the Septuagint reads Codex Vaticanus, Χαλγλεί , *Chalgleí*): A place in the journeyings of Israel named after Oboth, said to be "in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising" (Numbers 21:11), "in the border of Moab" (Numbers 33:44). The indications of position here given are not sufficient to guide to any identification, and, so far, nothing has been discovered in the district to help us. Called simply "lyim" (the King James Version "lim") in Numbers 33:45 .

Numbers 21:12 From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered.

BGT Numbers 21:12 κεθεν πραν κα παρεν βαλον ε ς φ ραγγα Ζαρετ

NET Numbers 21:12 From there they moved on and camped in the valley of Zered.

NLT Numbers 21:12 From there they traveled to the valley of Zered Brook and set up camp.

ESV Numbers 21:12 From there they set out and camped in the Valley of Zered.

NIV Numbers 21:12 From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley.

KJV Numbers 21:12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zered.

YLT Numbers 21:12 From thence they have journeyed, and encamp in the valley of Zered.

LXE Numbers 21:12 And thence they departed, and encamped in the valley of Zered.

ASV Numbers 21:12 From thence they journeyed, and encamped in the valley of Zered.

CSB Numbers 21:12 From there they went and camped at Zered Valley.

NKJ Numbers 21:12 From there they moved and camped in the Valley of Zered.

NRS Numbers 21:12 From there they set out, and camped in the Wadi Zered.

NAB Numbers 21:12 Setting out from there, they encamped in the Wadi Zered.

NJB Numbers 21:12 They set out from there and camped in the gorge of the Zered.

GWN Numbers 21:12 From there they moved and set up camp at the Zered River.

- **Wadi Zered.**: De 2:13,14,
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Zered Marking Boundary Between Edom and Moab to the North

CROSSING INTO THE PROMISED LAND

From there they set out ([nasa](#) - pulled up tent pegs) **and camped in Wadi Zered** - **Holman Bible Dictionary** says **Wadi Zered** (also called "valley of Zered") is where "The Israelites crossed this book marking an end to their wilderness wandering and **entrance into the Promised Land.**" Moses records "Now arise and cross over the brook Zered yourselves.' So we crossed over the brook Zered. 14 "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." (Dt 2:13-14)

Wadi ([05158](#))(**nachal**) means torrent, torrent valley, wadi, a dry ravine that became a raging torrent during rainy season.

W E Vine - **Nachal** occurs about 139 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods. This noun represents a dry valley in which water runs during the rainy season: "And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there" (Gen. 26:17, the first biblical appearance). The word can signify the "wady" when it is full of rushing water. Indeed, it appears to describe the rushing water itself: "And he took them, and sent them over the brook ..." (Ge 32:23). Sometimes **naḥal** means a permanent stream or "river": "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat" (Lev. 11:9). Finally, the word represents a miner's shaft (only once in the Scripture): "They open shafts in a valley away from where men live" (Job 28:4, rsv).

The Pentateuch consistently distinguishes between extra-Egyptian waterways (calling them **naḥal**, 13 times, and **nāhār**, 13 times) and inter-Egyptian waterways (calling them **y(e)or**). This distinction demonstrates the kind of firsthand knowledge and historical concern expected from a mature eyewitness.

Naḥal is used figuratively of many things that emerge and disappear suddenly or that have extreme onrushing power such as the pride of nations (Isa. 66:12), the strength of the invader (Jer. 47:2), and the power of the foe (Psa. 18:4). Torrents of oil do not please God if the offerer's heart is wrongly disposed (Mic. 6:7). God overflows the godly with torrents of His good pleasure (Psa. 36:8). The eschaton is typified by streams, or torrents, in the desert (Ezek. 47:5-19; cf. Exod. 17:3ff.). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Nachal - 123v - brook(44), brooks(5), flowing(1), ravine(2), ravines(2), river(13), rivers(5), shaft(1), stream(5), streams(5), torrent(7), torrents(3), valley(39), valleys(4), Wadi(1), wadi(1), wadis(3). Gen. 26:17; Gen. 26:19; Gen. 32:23; Lev. 11:9; Lev. 11:10; Lev. 23:40; Num. 13:23; Num. 13:24; Num. 21:12; Num. 21:14; Num. 21:15; Num. 24:6; Num. 32:9; Num. 34:5; Deut. 1:24; Deut. 2:13; Deut. 2:14; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 2:36; Deut. 2:37; Deut. 3:8; Deut. 3:12; Deut. 3:16; Deut. 4:48; Deut. 8:7; Deut. 9:21; Deut. 10:7; Deut. 21:4; Deut. 21:6; Jos. 12:1; Jos. 12:2; Jos. 13:9; Jos. 13:16; Jos. 15:4; Jos. 15:7; Jos. 15:47; Jos. 16:8; Jos. 17:9; Jos. 19:11; Jdg. 4:7; Jdg. 4:13; Jdg. 5:21; Jdg. 16:4; 1 Sam. 15:5; 1 Sam. 17:40; 1 Sam. 30:9; 1 Sam. 30:10; 1 Sam. 30:21;

2 Sam. 15:23; 2 Sam. 17:13; 2 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 23:30; 2 Sam. 24:5; 1 Ki. 2:37; 1 Ki. 8:65; 1 Ki. 15:13; 1 Ki. 17:3; 1 Ki. 17:4; 1 Ki. 17:5; 1 Ki. 17:6; 1 Ki. 17:7; 1 Ki. 18:5; 1 Ki. 18:40; 2 Ki. 3:16; 2 Ki. 3:17; 2 Ki. 10:33; 2 Ki. 23:6; 2 Ki. 23:12; 2 Ki. 24:7; 1 Chr. 11:32; 2 Chr. 7:8; 2 Chr. 15:16; 2 Chr. 20:16; 2 Chr. 29:16; 2 Chr. 30:14; 2 Chr. 32:4; 2 Chr. 33:14; Neh. 2:15; Job 6:15; Job 20:17; Job 21:33; Job 22:24; Job 28:4; Job 30:6; Job 40:22; Ps. 18:4; Ps. 36:8; Ps. 74:15; Ps. 78:20; Ps. 83:9; Ps. 104:10; Ps. 110:7; Ps. 124:4; Prov. 18:4; Prov. 30:17; Eccl. 1:7; Cant. 6:11; Isa. 7:19; Isa. 11:15; Isa. 15:7; Isa. 27:12; Isa. 30:28; Isa. 30:33; Isa. 34:9; Isa. 35:6; Isa. 57:5; Isa. 57:6; Isa. 66:12; Jer. 31:9; Jer. 31:40; Jer. 47:2; Lam. 2:18; Ezek. 47:5; Ezek. 47:6; Ezek. 47:7; Ezek. 47:9; Ezek. 47:12; Ezek. 47:19; Ezek. 48:28; Joel 3:18; Amos 5:24; Amos 6:14; Mic. 6:7

Henry Morris - It is difficult to trace the various moves of the Israelites during their forty years in the wilderness. The itineraries in Numbers 21 and Numbers 33, for example, seem impossible to correlate in any detail. It must be remembered, however, that the Israelite nation consisted of several million people plus all their cattle, horses and equipment. They must have been scattered over a large area of the wilderness in order to have pasturage for their flocks and herds. It is possible that much of the moving described in the Mosaic records refers mainly to moving the tabernacle and its attendants (along with Moses)--perhaps making a circuit among the various tribal encampments.

Related Resource:

- [Holman Bible Dictionary](#) - **Brook of Zered** - Also called "valley of Zered." The Israelites crossed this brook marking an end to their wilderness wandering and entrance into the Promised Land (Numbers 21:12 ; Deuteronomy 2:13-14). It is usually identified with modern wadi el-Hesa which flows into the southeast end of the Dead Sea. The wadi is about 35 miles long and forms the boundary between Moab and Edom. The Brook of Zered is the same as the Brook of the Willows (Isaiah 15:7), the dry stream bed of 2 Kings 3:16 (see 2 Kings 3:22), and perhaps the same as the Brook of the Arabah (Amos 6:14), though see Brook of the Arabah .
- [The Jewish Encyclopedia](#) [Zered, Brook](#) One of the stations of the Israelites in the wilderness, indicated as the end of the thirty-eighth year of wandering (Numbers 21:12 Deuteronomy 2:13-14). The Targum of pseudo-Jonathan renders the name by "valley where willows grow," and thus apparently etymologizes it by the Talmudic זריתא, which is confirmed by the Septuagint reading Ζ ἄ ρ ε τ . The location of Zered is given as east of the Jordan on the border between Moab and Edom before one crosses the River Arnon.
- [Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#) - **ZARED or ZERED** (more accurately), VALLEY OF; or brook or watercourse of (Numbers 21:12; Deuteronomy 2:13-14). Running into the Dead Sea at the S.E. corner: the boundary between the districts of Jebel and Kerek: now wady el Ahsy, between Moab and Edom (Robinson Bib. Res., 2:157), containing a hot spring called by the Arabs "the bath of Solomon." The limit of Israel's wandering; marking the time of the wilderness sojourn on one side as Kadesh did on the other. The Speaker's Commentary identifies it with wady Ain Franjy, the main upper branch of wady Kerak; the first western brook that crossed Israel's line of march. So the name marked an era in their progress; and the summons to cross it is noted in Deuteronomy 2:13-14. Zered means "osier"; and wady Safsaf, "Willows Brook", is given to the tributary joining wady ain Franjy below Kerak. (See WILLOWS BROOK.) All the generation of the men of war had passed away by the time they reached Zered, fulfilling Numbers 14:23, that none of them should see the land. From the high ground on the other side of Zered (if wady Kerak) a distant view of the promised land and even of Jerusalem might be obtained.

Numbers 21:13 From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that comes out of the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

BGT Numbers 21:13 κα κεθεν πραντες παρεν βαλον ε ρ τ πραν Αρνων ν τ ρ μ τ ξ χον π τ ν ρ ω ν τ ν Αμορρα ων σπιν γ ρ Αρνων ρια Μωαβ ν μ σον Μωαβ κα ν μ σον το Αμορρα ου

NET Numbers 21:13 From there they moved on and camped on the other side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that extends from the regions of the Amorites, for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

NLT Numbers 21:13 Then they moved out and camped on the far side of the Arnon River, in the wilderness adjacent to the territory of the Amorites. The Arnon is the boundary line between the Moabites and the Amorites.

ESV Numbers 21:13 From there they set out and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

NIV Numbers 21:13 They set out from there and camped alongside the Arnon, which is in the desert extending into Amorite territory. The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

KJV Numbers 21:13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

YLT Numbers 21:13 From thence they have journeyed, and encamp beyond Arnon, which is in the wilderness which is coming out of the border of the Amorite, for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorite;

LXE Numbers 21:13 And they departed thence and encamped on the other side of Arnon in the wilderness, the country which extends from the coasts of the Amorites; for Arnon is the borders of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

ASV Numbers 21:13 From thence they journeyed, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness, that cometh out of the border of the Amorites: for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

CSB Numbers 21:13 They set out from there and camped on the other side of the Arnon River, in the wilderness that extends from the Amorite border, because the Arnon was the Moabite border between Moab and the Amorites.

NKJ Numbers 21:13 From there they moved and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

NRS Numbers 21:13 From there they set out, and camped on the other side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that extends from the boundary of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

NAB Numbers 21:13 Setting out from there, they encamped on the other side of the Arnon, in the desert that extends from the territory of the Amorites; for the Arnon forms Moab's boundary with the Amorites.

NJB Numbers 21:13 They set out from there and camped on the other side of the Arnon. This gorge in the desert begins in the territory of the Amorites. For the Arnon is the frontier of Moab, between the Moabites and the Amorites.

GWN Numbers 21:13 They moved from there and set up camp on the other side of the Arnon Valley in the desert that extends into Amorite territory. (The Arnon Valley is the border between Moab and the Amorites.)

- Nu 21:14 22:36 De 2:24 Jdg 11:18 Isa 16:2 Jer 48:20
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Arnon River Marking [Northern Border of Moab](#) - Click to Enlarge

From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon Which is in the wilderness that comes out of the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. - NRSV "and camped on the other side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that extends from the boundary of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the boundary of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites." If you compare with [the map of above locating Zered](#), you can see that Israel was moving progressively northward. The Arnon had a deep canyon which effectively served as Moab's northern boundary. As noted above, Wadi [Zered](#) apparently marked the southern boundary of Moab. The Arnon River would eventually mark the southern border of the territory allotted to the tribe of Reuben (Dt 3:8, 16; Josh 13:16)

Question: [Who were the Amorites?](#)

Answer: The Amorites were an ancient nation mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. They were descended from one of the sons of Canaan (Genesis 10:15–16). In early inscriptions, the Amorites were also known as Amurra or Amurri. The "land of the Amorites" included Syria and Israel. Some of the southern mountains of Judea were also called the hill country of the Amorites (Deuteronomy 1:7, 19-20).

Two kings of the Amorites named Sihon and Og were defeated by the Israelites under Moses' leadership (Deuteronomy 31:4). In Joshua 10:10, five Amorite kings were defeated by the people of Israel, and the victory was decisively won in Joshua 11:8. In the time of Samuel, peace existed between Israel and the Amorites (1 Samuel 7:14).

Less than a century later, King Solomon forced the remaining Amorites into slavery: "All the people who were left of the Amorites . . . who were not of the people of Israel—their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to devote to destruction—these Solomon drafted to be slaves" (1 Kings 9:20-21). The Amorites are last mentioned in Amos 2:10. It is assumed they either died out or were absorbed into the culture of Israel.

The Amorites were known as fierce warriors during their prime. Moses referred to Og, the king of the Amorites, as a very tall man whose bed was approximately 13.5 feet long (Deuteronomy 3:11). Despite their strong numbers and military might, the Amorites were destroyed due to their worship of false gods. Israel's conquest of their land was part of God's judgment on the pagan Amorite culture.

Here are a couple lessons to learn from the Amorites:

First, only the one, true God is worthy of worship. The idols of the Amorites and the false gods they represent cannot compete with the omnipotent God of Israel.

Also, God gives nations opportunity to repent before judgment (2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:20-21). The Amorite nation had plenty of time to turn from their idolatry, but they despised God's goodness and longsuffering and refused to repent (Romans 2:4). The Lord's judgment upon them was severe, and anyone who imitates their rebellion will eternally regret it (Romans 2:5; Matthew 10:28; Revelation 2:22-23). GotQuestions.org

Numbers 21:14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "Waheb in Suphah, And the wadis of the Arnon,

BGT Numbers 21:14 δι το το λ γεται ν βιβλ π λεμος το κυρ ου τ ν Ζωοβ φλ γισεν κα το ς χειμ ρρους Αρνων

NET Numbers 21:14 This is why it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "Waheb in Suphah and the wadis, the Arnon

NLT Numbers 21:14 For this reason The Book of the Wars of the LORD speaks of "the town of Waheb in the area of Suphah, and the ravines of the Arnon River,

ESV Numbers 21:14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "Waheb in Suphah, and the valleys of the Arnon,

NIV Numbers 21:14 That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says:"... Waheb in Suphah and the ravines, the Arnon

KJV Numbers 21:14 Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon,

YLT Numbers 21:14 therefore it is said in a book, 'The wars of Jehovah,' -- 'Waheb in Suphah, And the brooks of Arnon;

LXE Numbers 21:14 Therefore it is said in a book, A war of the Lord has set on fire Zoob, and the brooks of Arnon.

ASV Numbers 21:14 Wherefore it is said in the book of the Wars of Jehovah, Vaheb in Suphah, And the valleys of the Arnon,

CSB Numbers 21:14 Therefore it is stated in the Book of the LORD's Wars: Waheb in Suphah and the ravines of the Arnon,

NKJ Numbers 21:14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD: "Waheb in Suphah, The brooks of the Arnon,

NRS Numbers 21:14 Wherefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "Waheb in Suphah and the wadis. The Arnon

NAB Numbers 21:14 Hence it is said in the "Book of the Wars of the LORD": "Waheb in Suphah and the wadies,

NJB Numbers 21:14 That is why it says in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh: ' . . .Waheb near Suphah and the gorges of the Arnon

GWN Numbers 21:14 This is how it's described in the Book of the Wars of the LORD:"... Waheb in Suphah and the valleys,

- in the book: Jos 10:13 2Sa 1:18
- What he did: or, Vaheb in Suphah, The following seems to be the sense of this passage: "From Vaheb in Suphah, and the

torrents of Arnon, even the effusion of the torrents, which goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth for the boundary of Moab; even from thence to the well; (which is the well of which Jehovah spake unto Moses, Gather the people, and I will give them water. Then sang Israel this song: Spring up, O Well! Answer ye to it. The well, princes digged it; even nobles of the people digged it, by a decree, upon their borders;) and from the wilderness (or the well, as in LXX.) to Mattanah; and from Mattanah," etc. The whole of this, from ver. 14-20, is a fragment from "the book of the wars of Jehovah," probably a book of remembrances or directions written by Moses for the use of Joshua, and describes the several boundaries of the land of Moab. This rendering removes every obscurity, and obviates every difficulty.

Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD- There is no other mention of this book in Scripture.

Boyd on the Book of the Wars of the LORD- A work quoted in Numbers 21:14 f. to settle a point with regard to the boundary of Moab and Ammon. The quotations in Numbers 21:17-18 ; Numbers 21:27-30 are probably from the same original. This is the only mention of the book in the OT. It is not likely that the work is identical with the Book of Jashar . It probably consisted of a collection of songs celebrating the victories of Israel over their neighbours. The song in Exodus 15:1-19 describing the Lord as 'a man of war' has been thought to be derived from it. The date of the work is unknown. As it deals with the heroic age, it likely originated in the period immediately following, and it has been dated in the reign of Omri (Stade), and by others as early as the time of David or Solomon. If Numbers 21:27-30 refer to the wars of Omri, we must regard the work as a product of the N. kingdom. ([Hastings Dictionary of the Bible](#))

Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Wars of the Lord, the Book of the](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Wars of Yahweh \(the Lord\), Book of the](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Wars of the Lord, Book of The Book of the Wars of the Lord. \(2\) Book of the Wars of the Lor](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Wars of the Lord, Book of the](#)

Waheb in Suphah, And the wadis of the Arnon,

NET NOTE - The ancient versions show a wide variation here: Smr has "Waheb on the Sea of Reeds," the Greek version has "he has set Zoob on fire and the torrents of Arnon." Several modern versions treat the first line literally, taking the two main words as place names: Waheb and Suphah. This seems most likely, but then there would then be no subject or verb. One would need something like "the Israelites marched through." The KJV, following the Vulgate, made the first word a verb and read the second as "Red Sea"—"what he did in the Red Sea." But subject of the passage is the terrain. D. L. Christensen proposed emending the first part from אֶת וְהַב ('et vahev) to אֶתְּהָוָה! ('attah yehvah, "the LORD came"). But this is subjective. See his article "Num 21:14–15 and the Book of the Wars of Yahweh," CBQ 36 (1974): 359–60.

Question: [What is the Book of the Wars of the Lord?](#)

Answer: The Book of the Wars of the Lord is a book referred to in Scripture but now lost to us. The only information we have about the Book of the Wars of the Lord is what is found in one passage of Scripture. The way it is mentioned in Scripture would indicate that it was somewhat well-known or accessible to the people of ancient Israel. Such "lost books" are not uncommon, because very few ancient books have survived to the present day. Given the impermanency of most ancient writings, it is a testament to the miracle of Scripture that the books of the Bible have done more than survive—there are so many ancient copies that we can, with great certainty, discern what the originals said.

The biblical passage that mentions the Book of the Wars of the Lord concerns the Israelites' trek through the wilderness on their way to the [Promised Land](#): "The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth. Then they set out from Oboth and camped in Iye Abarim, in the wilderness that faces Moab toward the sunrise. From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley. They set out from there and camped alongside the Arnon, which is in the wilderness extending into Amorite territory. The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says: ' . . . Zahab in Suphah and the ravines, the Arnon and the slopes of the ravines that lead to the settlement of Ar and lie along the border of Moab'" (Numbers 21:10–15).

According to Numbers 21, Israel was careful to stay out of [Edomite](#), [Moabite](#), and [Amorite](#) territory, camping along the Arnon River. Edom was descended from Esau, and Moab from Lot; these were not part of the Canaanite people that Israel was supposed to destroy. In Numbers 20, Moses had requested permission to pass through the land of Edom, since it was a more direct route to the land of Canaan. Edom refused permission and mustered an army to keep Israel out, but Israel simply withdrew and traveled another direction.

Ancient borders were often a source of contention, and Israel was very careful to stay out of Moabite territory. Moses sent messengers to [King Sihon](#) of the Amorites, requesting passage through their territory, promising, "We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory" (Numbers 21:22). However, Sihon refused to allow the Israelites into his land and mustered the Amorite army against Israel. By the power of the Lord, the Israelites defeated the Amorites and camped in their territory (verses 23–26). If the citation of "the poets" in verse 27 is a reference to the authors of the Book of the Wars of the Lord, then another passage from that book is used to poetically relate the overthrow of the Amorite kingdom (verses 27–30).

From the title, "The Book of the Wars of the Lord," some assume that this was a book about battles in which the Lord fought or perhaps were fought on His behalf; and it may have been just such a book. However, Hebrew books were often named by the first word or phrase in the book and were not a summary of the book's contents. For instance the book of Exodus is called *Shemot* in Hebrew, which means "names." The book of Exodus begins, "These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob." Thus, the title of an ancient book might tell very little about the content of the book.

In summary, we know little about the Book of the Wars of the Lord, but we may assume that this ancient work documented geographical boundaries between nations and possibly related poetic descriptions of particular battles. It is even possible that the Moabites may have known about the Book of the Wars of the Lord. In any case, the work is cited in Numbers to help substantiate the claim that Israel did not encroach on Moabite territory. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Numbers 21:15 And the slope of the wadis That extends to the site of Ar, And leans to the border of Moab."

BGT Numbers 21:15 κα το ς χειμ ρρους κατ στησεν κατοικ σαι Ηρ κα πρ σκειται το ς ρ οισ Μωαβ

NET Numbers 21:15 and the slope of the valleys that extends to the dwelling of Ar, and falls off at the border of Moab."

NLT Numbers 21:15 and the ravines that extend as far as the settlement of Ar on the border of Moab."

ESV Numbers 21:15 and the slope of the valleys that extends to the seat of Ar, and leans to the border of Moab."

NIV Numbers 21:15 and the slopes of the ravines that lead to the site of Ar and lie along the border of Moab."

KJV Numbers 21:15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.

YLT Numbers 21:15 And the spring of the brooks, Which turned aside to the dwelling of Ar, And hath leaned to the border of Moab.'

LXE Numbers 21:15 And he has appointed brooks to cause Er to dwell there; and it lies near to the coasts of Moab.

ASV Numbers 21:15 And the slope of the valleys That inclineth toward the dwelling of Ar, And leaneth upon the border of Moab.

CSB Numbers 21:15 even the slopes of the ravines that extend to the site of Ar and lie along the border of Moab.

NKJ Numbers 21:15 And the slope of the brooks That reaches to the dwelling of Ar, And lies on the border of Moab."

NRS Numbers 21:15 and the slopes of the wadis that extend to the seat of Ar, and lie along the border of Moab."

NAB Numbers 21:15 Arnon and the wadi gorges That reach back toward the site of Ar and slant to the border of Moab."

NJB Numbers 21:15 and the slope of the ravine running down to the site of Ar and over against the frontier of Moab.'

GWN Numbers 21:15 Arnon and the slopes of the valleys that go down to the site of Ar and lie along the border of Moab...."

- Ar: Nu 21:28 De 2:9,18,29 Isa 15:1
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And the slope of the wadis That extends to the site of Ar, And leans to the border of Moab

NET NOTE on Ar - The place is unknown; it is apparently an important city in the region.

Numbers 21:16 From there they continued to Beer, that is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Assemble the people, that I may give them water."

BGT Numbers 21:16 κα κεθεν τ φρ αρ το τ σιν τ φρ αρ ε πεν κ ριος πρ ς Μωυσ ν συν γαγε τ ν λα ν κα
δ σω α το ς δωρ πιε ν

NET Numbers 21:16 And from there they traveled to Beer; that is the well where the LORD spoke to Moses, "Gather the people and I will give them water."

NLT Numbers 21:16 From there the Israelites traveled to Beer, which is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Assemble the people, and I will give them water."

ESV Numbers 21:16 And from there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, so that I may give them water."

NIV Numbers 21:16 From there they continued on to Beer, the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together and I will give them water."

KJV Numbers 21:16 And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

YLT Numbers 21:16 And from thence they journeyed to Beer; it is the well concerning which Jehovah said to Moses, 'Gather the people, and I give to them -- water.'

LXE Numbers 21:16 And thence they came to the well; this is the well of which the Lord said to Moses, Gather the people, and I will give them water to drink.

ASV Numbers 21:16 And from thence they journeyed to Beer: that is the well whereof Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

CSB Numbers 21:16 From there they went to Beer, the well the LORD told Moses about, "Gather the people so I may give them water."

NKJ Numbers 21:16 From there they went to Beer, which is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water."

NRS Numbers 21:16 From there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water."

NAB Numbers 21:16 From there they went to Beer, where there was the well of which the LORD said to Moses, "Bring the people together, and I will give them water."

NJB Numbers 21:16 And from there they went to Beer, that being the well in connection with which Yahweh had said to Moses, 'Call the people together and I will give them water.'

GWN Numbers 21:16 From there they went to Beer Well. This is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people, and I will give them water."

- **Beer:** Jdg 9:21
- Gather: Nu 20:8 Ex 17:6 Isa 12:3 41:17,18 43:20 49:10 Joh 4:10,14 Joh 7:37-39 Rev 21:6 22:1,17
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

From there they continued to [Beer](#), that is the well where the LORD said to Moses, **'Assemble the people, that I may give them water**

Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Sing to it!"

BGT Numbers 21:17 τ τε σεν Ισραηλ τ σμα το το π το φρ ατος ξ ρχετε α τ

NET Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well, sing to it!"

NLT Numbers 21:17 There the Israelites sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Yes, sing its praises!"

ESV Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well!-- Sing to it!--"

NIV Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Sing about it,

KJV Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:

YLT Numbers 21:17 Then singeth Israel this song, concerning the well -- they have answered to it:

LXE Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song at the well, Begin to sing of the well;

ASV Numbers 21:17 Then sang Israel this song: Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:

CSB Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: Spring up, well-- sing to it!

NKJ Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it--"

NRS Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well!-- Sing to it!--"

NAB Numbers 21:17 Then it was that Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well!-- so sing to it--"

NJB Numbers 21:17 Then it was that Israel sang this song: Spring up, well! Sing out for the well,

GWN Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song about the well: "Make your water spring up! Sing to the well,

- sang: Ex 15:1,2 Jdg 5:1 Ps 105:2 106:12 Isa 12:1,2,5 Jas 5:13
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! Sing to it!"

[Spring Up, O Well](#)

I've got a river of life flowing out of me
Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see,
Opens prison doors, sets the captives free.
I've got a river of life flowing out of me.
Spring up, O well, within my soul.
Spring up, O well, and make me whole
Spring up, O well, and give to me
That life abundantly

Numbers 21:18 "The well, which the leaders sank, Which the nobles of the people dug, With the scepter and with their staffs." And from the wilderness they continued to Mattanah,

BGT Numbers 21:18 φρ αρ ρυξαν α τ ρχοντες ξελατ μησαν α τ βασιλε ς θν ν ν τ βασιλε α τ ν ν τ κυριεσαι α τ ν κα π φρ ατος ε ς Μανθαναιν

NET Numbers 21:18 The well which the princes dug, which the leaders of the people opened with their scepters and their staffs." And from the wilderness they traveled to Mattanah;

NLT Numbers 21:18 Sing of this well, which princes dug, which great leaders hollowed out with their scepters and staffs." Then the Israelites left the wilderness and proceeded on through Mattanah,

ESV Numbers 21:18 the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter and with their staffs." And from the wilderness they went on to Mattanah,

NIV Numbers 21:18 about the well that the princes dug, that the nobles of the people sank-- the nobles with scepters and staffs." Then they went from the desert to Mattanah,

KJV Numbers 21:18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah:

YLT Numbers 21:18 'A well -- digged it have princes, Prepared it have nobles of the people, With the lawgiver, with their staves.' And from the wilderness they journeyed to Mattanah,

LXE Numbers 21:18 the princes digged it, the kings of the nations in their kingdom, in their lordship sank it in the rock: and they went from the well to Manthanain,

ASV Numbers 21:18 The well, which the princes digged, Which the nobles of the people delved, With the sceptre, and with their staves. And from the wilderness they journeyed to Mattanah;

CSB Numbers 21:18 The princes dug the well; the nobles of the people hollowed it out with a scepter and with their staves. They went from the wilderness to Mattanah,

NKJ Numbers 21:18 The well the leaders sank, Dug by the nation's nobles, By the lawgiver, with their staves." And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah,

NRS Numbers 21:18 the well that the leaders sank, that the nobles of the people dug, with the scepter, with the staff." From the wilderness to Mattanah,

NAB Numbers 21:18 The well that the princes sank, that the nobles of the people dug, with their scepters and their staves." From Beer they went to Mattanah,

NJB Numbers 21:18 sunk by the princes, dug by the people's leaders with the sceptre, with their staves! -and from the desert to Mattanah,

GWN Numbers 21:18 the well dug by princes, dug out by the nobles of the people with their scepters and staves." From the desert they went to Mattanah,

- princes: 2Ch 17:7-9 Ne 3:1,5 1Ti 6:17,18
- the lawgiver: De 5:31 33:4 Isa 33:22 Joh 1:17 Jas 4:12
- And from: Nu 33:45-47
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The well, which the leaders sank, Which the nobles of the people dug, With the scepter and with their staves."

NET NOTE - The brief song is supposed to be an old workers' song, and so the mention of leaders and princes is unusual. Some think they are given credit because they directed where the workers were to dig. The scepter and staff might have served some symbolic or divining custom.

And from the wilderness they continued to Mattanah

Holman Bible Dictionary [Mattanah](#) (mat' tuh nuh) Place name meaning, "gift." Stopping place in the wilderness (Numbers 21:18-19). The site is perhaps identical with khirbet el-Medeyineh about twelve miles southeast of Madeba. Pottery shards at that site indicate occupation from before 1,200 to about 800 B.C.

Related Resources:

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Mattanah](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Mattanah](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Mattanah](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Mattanah](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Mattanah](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Mattanah](#)

Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

BGT Numbers 21:19 κα π Μανθαναιν ε ς Νααλιηλ κα π Νααλιηλ ε ς Βαμωθ

NET Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth;

NLT Numbers 21:19 Nahaliel, and Bamoth.

ESV Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

NIV Numbers 21:19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

KJV Numbers 21:19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

YLT Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

LXE Numbers 21:19 and from Manthanain to Naaliel, and from Naaliel to Bamoth, and from Bamoth to Janen, which is in the plain of Moab as seen from the top of the quarried rock that looks toward the wilderness.

ASV Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth;

CSB Numbers 21:19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

NKJ Numbers 21:19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

NRS Numbers 21:19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

NAB Numbers 21:19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

NJB Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

GWN Numbers 21:19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth,

and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth - **Bamoth** means high place. It could be the location mentioned in Nu 22:41 where we read "Then it came about in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the **high places** (Bamoth) of Baal ([Bamoth-Baal](#)), and he saw from there a portion of the people."

Holman Bible Dictionary [Nahaliel](#) (nuh hay' lih ehl) Place name meaning, "palm grove of God," "torrent valley of God," or less likely, "God is my inheritance." One of Israel's stopping places in Transjordan (Numbers 21:19). The stream bed is perhaps the wadi Zerqa Ma'in or the wadi Wala, a north tributary of the Arnon.

Holman Bible Dictionary [Bamoth](#) (bay' muhth) Place name and common noun meaning, "high places." A place in Moab where Israel stayed during the wilderness wanderings (Numbers 21:19-20). Some would equate it with [Bamoth-Baal](#).

FSB on Bamoth - When used as a generic noun, "high places" refers to illicit shrines throughout Israel and Judah (e.g., Lev 26:30; 1 Kgs 3:2; 2 Kgs 17:9). The proper place name Bamoth (bamah) is attested the OT (Isa 15:2; 16:12; Jer 48:35) and in the Moabite Stela (line 3). As a place-name, Bamoth is used only of locations in Moab.

Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Nahaliel](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Nahaliel](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Nahaliel](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Nahaliel](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Nahaliel](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Nahaliel](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Bamoth-Baal](#) [Bamoth](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bamoth-Baal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bamoth](#), [Bamoth-Baal](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Bamoth](#); [Bamoth-Baal](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Bamoth-Baal](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Bamoth-Baal](#)

Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah which overlooks the wasteland.

BGT Numbers 21:20 κα π Βαμωθ ε ς ν πην σιν ν τ πεδ Μωαβ π κορυφ ς το λελαξεμ νου τ βλ πον κατ πρ σωπον τ ς ρ μου

NET Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the country of Moab, near the top of Pisgah, which overlooks the wilderness.

NLT Numbers 21:20 After that they went to the valley in Moab where Pisgah Peak overlooks the wasteland.

ESV Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that looks down on the desert.

NIV Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where the top of Pisgah overlooks the wasteland.

KJV Numbers 21:20 And from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

YLT Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth in the valley which is in the field of Moab to the top of Pisgah, which hath looked on the front of the wilderness.

LXE Numbers 21:20 And Moses sent ambassadors to Seon king of the Amorites, with peaceable words, saying,

ASV Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the field of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh down upon the desert.

CSB Numbers 21:20 from Bamoth to the valley in the territory of Moab near the Pisgah highlands that overlook the wasteland.

NKJ Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth, in the valley that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah which looks down on the wasteland.

NRS Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that overlooks the wasteland.

NAB Numbers 21:20 from Bamoth to the cleft in the plateau of Moab at the headland of Pisgah that overlooks Jeshimon.

NJB Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley that opens into the country of Moab, towards the heights of Pisgah overlooking the desert.

GWN Numbers 21:20 and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where Mount Pisgah overlooks Jeshimon.

- country: Heb. field, Nu 22:1 26:63 33:49,50 De 1:5
- to the: Nu 23:14 De 3:27 4:49 34:1
- Pisgah: or the hill
- Jeshimon: or, the wilderness, Nu 23:28
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah which overlooks the wasteland - FSB says **Pisgah** is "Likely refers to a mountain range, though a mountain or a district that included mountains are also possible."

Pisgah - 8v - Num. 21:20; Num. 23:14; Deut. 3:17; Deut. 3:27; Deut. 4:49; Deut. 34:1; Jos. 12:3; Jos. 13:20

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia **Pisgah** piz'ga (הַגִּזְּה , *h a- pišgāh*; Φασγά , *Phasgá* , το λελαξευμένον , *tó lelaxeuμένον* , η λαξευτή , *hē laxeuté*): This name, which has always the definite article, appears only in combination either with *rō'sh* , "head," "top," or *'ashdōth* , not translated in the King James Version save in Deuteronomy 4:49 , where it is rendered "springs" the Revised Version (British and American) uniformly "slopes," the Revised Version margin "springs." **Pisgah** is identified with Nebo in Deuteronomy 34:1 ; compare Deuteronomy 3:27 . "The top of Pisgah, which looketh down upon the desert" marks a stage in the march of the host of Israel (Numbers 21:20). Hither Balak brought Balaam to the field of Zophim (Numbers 23:14). Here Moses obtained his view of the Promised Land, and died. See NEBO . Many scholars (e.g. Buhl, *GAP* , 122; Gray, "Numbers," *ICC* , 291) take Pisgah as the name applying to the mountain range in which the Moab plateau terminates to the West, the "top" or "head" of Pisgah being the point in which the ridge running out westward from the main mass culminates. The summit commands a wide view, and looks down upon the desert. The identification is made surer by the name *Tal'at eš -Šufa* found here, which seems to correspond with the field of Zophim.

'Ashdōth is the construct plural of *'ashēdhāh* (singular form not found), from *'eshedh* , "foundation," "bottom," "lower part" (slope); compare Assyrian *ishdu* , "foundation." Some would, derive it from Aramaic *'ashadh* , "to pour," whence "fall" or "slope" (*OHL* , under the word). Ashdoth-pisgah overlooked the Dead Sea from the East (Deuteronomy 3:17 ; Deuteronomy 4:49 ; Joshua 12:3 ; Joshua 13:20). There can be no reasonable doubt that Ashdoth-pisgah signifies the steep slopes of the mountain descending into the contiguous valleys.

It is worthy of note that Septuagint does not uniformly render Pisgah by a proper name, but sometimes by a derivative of *laxeúō*, "to hew" or "to dress stone" (Numbers 21:20 ; Numbers 23:14 ; Deuteronomy 3:27 ; Deuteronomy 4:49). Jerome (*Onomasticon* , under the word *Asedoth*) gives *abscisum* as the Latin equivalent of *Fasga* . He derives Pisgah from *pāṣagh* , which, in new Hebrew, means "to split," "to cut off." This suggests a mountain the steep sides of which give it the appearance of having been "cut out." This description applies perfectly to *Jebel Nebā* as viewed from the Dead Sea.

Related Resources.

- American Tract Society [Pisgah](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Pisgah](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Pisgah](#)
- **Fausset Bible Dictionary [Pisgah](#)** A ridge of the Abarim mountains W. from Heshbon. Nebo was a town on, or near, that ridge, lying on its western slope (Numbers 21:20; Numbers 32:3; Numbers 32:38; Deuteronomy 32:49; Deuteronomy 34:1). From Pisgah, Israel gained their first view of the Dead Sea and Jordan valley; hence Moses too viewed the land of promise. The correct designation for the mount is not "Nebo" (which has become usual for convenience sake) but "the mountain adjoining Nebo." In Scripture Nebo denotes only the town (Isaiah 15:2; Jeremiah 48:1-22). The uniform peakless nature of Pisgah caused its parts to be distinguished only by the names of the adjacent villages. It always has the article "THE Pisgah" E. of Jordan, near "the field of Moab, opposite Jericho." The field of Zophim was on it Ashsoth-Pisgah; Deuteronomy 3:17. (See [Ashdoth Pisgah](#)) Pisgah is derived from paasag "to divide," a detached range of Abarim. Tristram from a point about 4,500 ft. high, three miles S.W. of Heshbon and one and a half W. of Main, saw to the N. and E. the Gilead hills, and the vast Belka ocean of grain and grass; to the S., Her and Seir of Arabia; to the W., the Dead Sea and Jordan valley and the familiar objects near Jerusalem; and over Jordan, Gerizim's round top, and further the Esdraelon plain and the shoulder of Carmel; to the N. rose Tabor's outline, Gilboa and little Hermon (jebel Duhy); in front rose Ajlun's dark forests, ending in Mount Gilead, behind Es Salt (Ramoah Gilead) The name Pisgah survives only on the N.W. end of the Dead Sea, in the Ras el Feshkah (Hebrew: Rosh ha-Pisgah , "top of Pisgah"). Jebel Siugah ("fragment") probably answers to Pisgah. It is "over against Jericho," and the view corresponds. It is a fragment cut off by declivities on all sides, and separated from Nebo by the wady Haisa.
- **Holman Bible Dictionary [Pisgah](#)** (pihss' guh) Place name perhaps meaning, "the divided one." Mountain in the Abarim range across the Jordan River from Jericho. Some Bible scholars believe it was part of Mount Nebo; others think it could have been a separate rise, either en-Neba or near modern Khirbet Tsijaga. God allowed Moses to view the Promised Land from the heights of Pisgah (Deuteronomy 34:1) but would not let him cross into Canaan. Israel had camped near Pisgah (Numbers 21:20). Balak took Balaam to its height so the prophet could see Israel and curse them (Numbers 23:14). It was a limit of Sihon's kingdom (Joshua 12:23); Ashdoth-pisgah in KJV) and also for the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:20).
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Pisgah](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Pisgah](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Pisgah](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Pisgah](#)

Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying,

BGT Numbers 21:21 κα π σπειλεν Μωυσ ς πρ σβεις πρ ς Σηων βασιλ α Αμορρα ων λ γοις ε ρηνικο ς λ γων

NET Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, saying,

NLT Numbers 21:21 The Israelites then sent ambassadors to King Sihon of the Amorites with this message:

ESV Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

NIV Numbers 21:21 Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites:

KJV Numbers 21:21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

YLT Numbers 21:21 And Israel sendeth messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorite, saying,

LXE Numbers 21:21 We will pass through thy land, we will go by the road; we will not turn aside to the field or to the vineyard.

ASV Numbers 21:21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

CSB Numbers 21:21 Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites:

NKJ Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

NRS Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, saying,

NAB Numbers 21:21 Now Israel sent men to Sihon, king of the Amorites, with the message,

NJB Numbers 21:21 Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites,

GWN Numbers 21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to say to King Sihon of the Amorites,

- Nu 20:14-19 De 2:26-28 Jdg 11:19-21

A MESSAGE TO SIHON OF THE AMORITES

Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites (see [note above](#)), **saying** - What is notable about the passages related to the Amorites is that they describe the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy given to Abraham in Genesis 15:16 "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." In these passages the time of judgment of the Amorite had come and would be meted out on two Amorite kings, Sihon, king of Heshbon (Nu 21:22-32) and Og, the king of Bashan (Nu 21:33-35) Israel is not journeying north along the eastern edge of Moab and so Israel requests passage through the Amorite kingdom of Sihon.

Question: [Who was Sihon, king of the Amorites?](#) (see also [note above](#) on **Amorites**)

Answer: Sihon was a king of the [Amorites](#), a pagan nation located east of the Jordan River near the Promised Land during the time of Moses. The city from which Sihon, king of the Amorites, ruled was called Heshbon. This city and its king were so famous that people wrote songs about them (Numbers 21:27–30). King Sihon was an enemy of the Israelites.

Sihon had conquered the king of Moab and had taken his land (Numbers 21:26). Later, when the Israelites asked to pass peacefully through Sihon's land, he refused them passage and came out to fight them (verse 23). But Israel under Moses' leadership fought back, defeated Sihon, and took all the land he had taken from the Moabite king, "from the Arnon to the Jabbok" (verse 24), two boundary rivers.

Later, the Israelites were opposed by the nation of Bashan, and God encouraged Moses to be unafraid of [Og, the king of Bashan](#), by reminding him of the defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Do not fear [Og], for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon'" (Numbers 21:34). God fulfilled this promise and gave Moses and the Israelites victory over Bashan. Moses listed their victories over Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, among the many blessings and protections of God (Deuteronomy 29:7). The land [east of the Jordan](#) taken from Sihon, king of the Amorites, was given to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (verse 8).

Sihon, king of the Amorites, was a mighty king, and his army was strong and terrible. It is likely that the Israelites were, humanly speaking, not strong enough to defeat Sihon's forces. The Israelites won because the Lord was with them. Their victory over Sihon is referenced again in the book of Joshua, when Rahab of Jericho tells the spies that her people had heard of the Israelites' victory over Sihon and were therefore afraid to come against them in battle. Rahab says, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us. . . . For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea . . . and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath" (Joshua 2:9–11).

Israel's miraculous victory over Sihon and the Amorites is heralded in the Psalms as well. Psalm 135:10–12 says, "He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—Sihon king of the Amorites . . .—and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel." Psalm 136:17–19 gives praise "to him who struck down great kings . . . and killed mighty kings—. . . Sihon king of the Amorites. His love endures forever."

No king, no army, no political system was enough to destroy God's people because God was their Protector, and the same is true for those who trust in Him today. It is His power that protects, saves, and keeps us (Romans 1:16). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38–39). Let Sihon do his worst; God's people will [overcome](#). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Numbers 21:22 "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."

BGT Numbers 21:22 παρελευσ μεθα δι τ ς γ ς σου τ δ πορευσ μεθα ο κ κκλινο μεν ο τε ε ς γρ ν ο τε ε ς μπελ να ο πι μεθα δωρ κ φρ ατ ς σου δ βασιλικ πορευσ μεθα ως παρ λθωμεν τ ρι σου

NET Numbers 21:22 "Let us pass through your land; we will not turn aside into the fields or into the vineyards, nor will we drink water from any well, but we will go along the King's Highway until we pass your borders."

NLT Numbers 21:22 "Let us travel through your land. We will be careful not to go through your fields and vineyards. We won't even drink water from your wells. We will stay on the king's road until we have passed through your territory."

ESV Numbers 21:22 "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into field or vineyard. We will not drink the water of a well. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory."

NIV Numbers 21:22 "Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway until we have passed through your territory."

KJV Numbers 21:22 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 high way, until we be past thy borders.

YLT Numbers 21:22 'Let me pass through thy land, we do not turn aside into a field, or into a vineyard, we do not drink waters of a well; in the king's way we go, till that we pass over thy border.'

LXE Numbers 21:22 We will not drink water out of thy well; we will go by the king's highway, until we have past thy boundaries.

ASV Numbers 21:22 Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn aside into field, or into vineyard; we will not drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway, until we have passed thy border.

CSB Numbers 21:22 "Let us travel through your land. We won't go into the fields or vineyards. We won't drink any well water. We will travel the King's Highway until we have traveled through your territory."

NKJ Numbers 21:22 "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory."

NRS Numbers 21:22 "Let me pass through your land; we will not turn aside into field or vineyard; we will not drink the water of any well; we will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory."

NAB Numbers 21:22 "Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, nor will we drink any well water, but we will go straight along the royal road until we have passed through your territory."

NJB Numbers 21:22 'I wish to pass through your country. We shall not stray into the fields or vineyards; we shall not drink the water from the wells; we shall keep to the king's highway until we have passed through your territory.'

GWN Numbers 21:22 "Let us go through your country. We won't go through any of your fields or vineyards or drink any of the water from your wells. We'll stay on the king's highway until we've passed through your territory."

- Nu 20:17
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE REQUEST TO PASS USING THE KING'S HIGHWAY

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 - This request indicates that Israel had no designs on this land, but just wanted safe passage.

FSB -This region was not part of the land originally promised to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; 15:1–6, 18). Numbers 32 also indicates that,

had the tribes of Reuben and Gad not asked to settle in these areas, they would have been left empty

Numbers 21:23 But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

BGT Numbers 21:23 κα ο κ ὄωκεν Σηων τ Ἰσραηλ παρελθε ν δι τ ν ρ ων α το κα συν γαγεν Σηων π ντα τ ν λα ν α το κα ξ λθεν παρατ ξασθαι τ Ἰσραηλ ε ς τ ν ρημον κα λθεν ε ς Ιασσα κα παρετ ξατο τ Ἰσραηλ

NET Numbers 21:23 But Sihon did not permit Israel to pass through his border; he gathered all his forces together and went out against Israel into the wilderness. When he came to Jahaz, he fought against Israel.

NLT Numbers 21:23 But King Sihon refused to let them cross his territory. Instead, he mobilized his entire army and attacked Israel in the wilderness, engaging them in battle at Jahaz.

ESV Numbers 21:23 But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. He gathered all his people together and went out against Israel to the wilderness and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

NIV Numbers 21:23 But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel.

KJV Numbers 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.

YLT Numbers 21:23 And Sihon hath not suffered Israel to pass through his border, and Sihon gathereth all his people, and cometh out to meet Israel into the wilderness, and cometh in to Jahaz, and fighteth against Israel.

LXE Numbers 21:23 And Seon did not allow Israel to pass through his borders, and Seon gathered all his people, and went out to set the battle in array against Israel into the wilderness; and he came to Jassa, and set the battle in array against Israel.

ASV Numbers 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 came to Jahaz; and he fought against Israel.

CSB Numbers 21:23 But Sihon would not let Israel travel through his territory. Instead, he gathered his whole army and went out to confront Israel in the wilderness. When he came to Jahaz, he fought against Israel.

NKJ Numbers 21:23 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.

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

NAB Numbers 21:23 Sihon, however, would not let Israel pass through his territory, but mustered all his forces and advanced into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he engaged Israel in battle.

NJB Numbers 21:23 But Sihon would not give Israel leave to pass through his country. He assembled all his people, marched into the desert to meet Israel, and reached Jahaz, where he gave battle to Israel.

GWN Numbers 21:23 Sihon wouldn't let Israel pass through his territory. Sihon gathered all his troops and came out into the desert to attack Israel. When Sihon's troops came to Jahaz, they fought against Israel.

- **Sihon** : De 2:30-32 29:7,8
- Jahaz: Jdg 11:20 Isa 15:4 Jer 48:34
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SIHON'S REFUSAL TO ISRAEL TO PASS THROUGH

But Sihon (see [note](#)) **would not permit Israel to pass through his border** - Sihon's message was the same as the king of Edom, but this time Israel would not turn away as they did at Edom. Notice from the parallel passages in Deuteronomy why Sihon said "no!" Yahweh hardened his heart for the express purpose to deliver him into the hand of Israel (Dt 2:30) Notice the especially

significant declaration by Yahweh that "I have begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to occupy, that you may possess his land." The LORD was now "making good" on His promise to Israel to give them the promised land!

Moses records this even in Deuteronomy 2:30-33 -

"But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God **hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate**, in order to deliver him into your hand, as he is today. 31 "The LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. **Begin to occupy**, that you may **possess** his land.' 32 "Then Sihon with all his people came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz. 33 **The LORD our God delivered him over to us**, and we defeated him with his sons and all his people.

So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel - His spirit hardened and his heart obstinate, Sihon came against Israel. Whereas the king of Edom sent out only his army (Nu 20:20) after giving warning (Nu 20:18), Sihon gathered all his people (so not just the army) and not with any warning (at least none is recorded).

Holman Bible Dictionary -Jahaz (jay' haz) Moabite place name perhaps meaning, "landsite." As they journeyed from the wilderness to the Promised Land, Israel defeated King Sihon there (Numbers 21:23-24 ; Deuteronomy 2:32-33 ; Judges 11:20-21). Isaiah's oracle against Moab described the isolated city of Jahaz as hearing the mourning of Heshbon and Elealeh (Isaiah 15:4). Jeremiah issued a similar warning (Jeremiah 48:34 ; compare Jeremiah 48:21). The name also appears with the Hebrew locative ah ending, thus being spelled Jahaza or Jahazah. Jahzah is also a variant spelling. It became part of the tribal territory of Reuben (Joshua 13:18) and a city of the Levites (Joshua 21:36 ; compare 1 Chronicles 6:78). On the Moabite stone, King Mesha of Moab claims an Israelite king (perhaps Jehu) built Jahaz and used it as a base in his unsuccessful fight against Mesha, Chemosh, the Moabite god driving the Israelites out. Mesha then annexed the city to Dibon. It has been variously located at Libb, six miles north of Dibon; Aleiyan; khirbet el-Medeiyineh; and khirbet Iskander, four miles north of Dibon, being the most popular suggestions.

Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Jahaz](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Jahaz](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jahaz](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Jahaz](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Jahaz](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Jahaz](#)

Numbers 21:24 Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer.

BGT Numbers 21:24 κα π ταξεν α τ ν Ισραηλ φ ν μαχα ρης κα κατεκυρ ευσαν τ ς γ ς α το π Αρνων ως Ιαββοκ ως υ ν Αμμων τι Ιαζηρ ρια υ ν Αμμων σ τ ν

NET Numbers 21:24 But the Israelites defeated him in battle and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the Ammonites, for the border of the Ammonites was strongly defended.

NLT Numbers 21:24 But the Israelites slaughtered them with their swords and occupied their land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. They went only as far as the Ammonite border because the boundary of the Ammonites was fortified.

ESV Numbers 21:24 And Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as to the Ammonites, for the border of the Ammonites was strong.

NIV Numbers 21:24 Israel, however, put him to the sword and took over his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only as far as the Ammonites, because their border was fortified.

KJV Numbers 21:24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.

YLT Numbers 21:24 And Israel smiteth him by the mouth of the sword, and possesseth his land from Arnon unto Jabbok -- unto the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon is strong.

LXE Numbers 21:24 And Israel smote him with the slaughter of the sword, and they became possessors of his land, from Arnon to Jaboc, as far as the children of Amman, for Jazer is the borders of the children of Amman.

ASV Numbers 21:24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from the Arnon unto the Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.

CSB Numbers 21:24 Israel struck him with the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only up to the Ammonite border, because it was fortified.

NKJ Numbers 21:24 Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon was fortified.

NRS Numbers 21:24 Israel put him to the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as to the Ammonites; for the boundary of the Ammonites was strong.

NAB Numbers 21:24 But Israel defeated him at the point of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok and as far as the country of the Ammonites, whose boundary was at Jazer.

NJB Numbers 21:24 Israel defeated him by force of arms and conquered his country from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the Ammonites, for Jazer marked the Ammonite frontier.

GWN Numbers 21:24 But Israel defeated them in battle and took possession of their land from the Arnon Valley to the Jabbok River. They stopped at the border of the Ammon because it was fortified.

- Israel: Nu 32:1-4,33-42 De 2:31-37 29:7 Jos 9:10 12:1-3 13:8-10 24:8 Jud 11:21-23 12:1,2 21:8 Ne 9:22 Ps 135:10-12 136:19 Am 2:9
- Arnon: Nu 21:13 Ge 32:22 De 3:16 Dt 2:19
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Jabbok River - [Click to Enlarge](#)

Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword - As noted above Israel fought Sihon but Yahweh delivered Sihon into their hand (Dt 2:33).

THOUGHT - This truth of God delivering and Israel fighting (God's Sovereignty, Man's Responsibility) reminds us even in the NT that "the battle is the Lord's" and that we need to depend wholly on the Holy Spirit in our ongoing spiritual war for our "struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12+)

And took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer - "as far as the Ammonites." (NET)

Jabbok was a 75-80 mile long perennial tributary of the Jordan River, flowing into it on the eastern side where it arches like a semi-circle. It is about 24 miles north of the Dead Sea (see map above). Its mouth is 40 miles NE of Jerusalem.

Jazer "was a city of the Amorites east of the Jordan taken, along with its towns, by Moses, and occupied by the tribe of Gad (Numbers 21:32 ; Numbers 32:35). The country was very fertile, and its spacious pasture-lands attracted the flock-masters of Gad (Numbers 32:1), the southern border of whose territory it marked (Joshua 13:25). It was assigned to the Merarite Levites (Joshua 21:39 ; 1 Chronicles 6:81). The place was reached by Joab when taking the census (2 Samuel 24:5). In the 40th year of King David mighty men of valor were found here to whom he entrusted the oversight in Reuben and Gad "for every matter pertaining to God, and run the affairs of the king" (1 Chronicles 26:32 f). The fruitfulness of the country is alluded to in Isaiah 16:8 f; Jeremiah 48:32 . ([ISBE](#))

ISBE on [Ammon: Ammonites](#) - The Hebrew tradition makes this tribe descendants of Lot and hence related to the Israelites (Genesis 19:38). This is reflected in the name usually employed in Old Testament to designate them, בְּנֵי אַמּוֹן , *Ben 'Ammī* , *Benē 'Ammōn* , "son of my people," "children of my people," i.e. relatives. Hence we find that the Israelites are commanded to avoid conflict with them on their march to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 2:19). Their dwelling-place was on the east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, between the Arnon and the Jabbok, but, before the advance of the Hebrews, they had been dispossessed of a portion of their land by the Amorites, who founded, along the east side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, the kingdom of Sihon (Numbers 21:21-31).

Related Resources:

- **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** [Jabbok](#) jab'-ok (yabboq, "luxuriant river"): A stream in Eastern Palestine first named in the history of Jacob, as crossed by the patriarch on his return from Paddan-aram, after leaving Mahanaim (Genesis 32:22). On the bank of this river he had his strange conflict with an unknown antagonist. The Jabbok was the northern boundary of the territory of Sihon the Amorite (Numbers 21:24). It is also named as the border of Ammon (Deuteronomy 3:16). It is now called Nahr ez-Zerqa, "river of blue," referring to the clear blue color of its water. It rises near to `Amman-Rabbath Ammon-and makes a wide circuit, flowing first to the East, then to the Northwest, until it is joined by the stream from Wady Jerash, at which point it turns westward, and flows, with many windings, to the Jordan, the confluence being just North of ed-Damiyeh. It drains a wider area than any other stream East of the Jordan, except the Yarmuk. The bed of the river is in a deep gorge with steep, and in many places precipitous, banks. It is a great cleft, cutting the land of Gilead in two. It is lined along its course by a luxuriant growth of oleander which, in season, lights up the valley with brilliant color. The length of the stream, taking no account of its innumerable windings, is about 60 miles. The mouth of the river has changed its position from time to time. In the lower reaches the vegetation is tropical. The river is fordable at many points, save when in full flood. The particular ford referred to in Genesis 32 cannot now be identified. W. Ewing
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Jabbok](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jabbok](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Jabbok](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Jabbok](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Ammonite](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Ammonites](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Ammon, Ammonites](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Ammon; Ammonites](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Ammonites](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Ammonite](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Ammon, Ammonites](#)

Numbers 21:25 Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all her villages.

BGT Numbers 21:25 καὶ λαβὲν Ἰσραὴλ πᾶσας τὰς πόλεις τὰς κατὰ κήσεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν πόσιν τὰς πόλιν τὴν Ἀμορραίων ἐσεβῶν καὶ ἐν πόσιν τὰς συγκυροσῶν αὐτῶν

NET Numbers 21:25 So Israel took all these cities; and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages.

NLT Numbers 21:25 So Israel captured all the towns of the Amorites and settled in them, including the city of Heshbon and its surrounding villages.

ESV Numbers 21:25 And Israel took all these cities, and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages.

NIV Numbers 21:25 Israel captured all the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements.

KJV Numbers 21:25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.

YLT Numbers 21:25 And Israel taketh all these cities, and Israel dwelleth in all the cities of the Amorite, in Heshbon, and in all its villages;

LXE Numbers 21:25 And Israel took all their cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Esebon, and in all cities belonging to it.

ASV Numbers 21:25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the towns thereof.

CSB Numbers 21:25 Israel took all the cities and lived in all these Amorite cities, including Heshbon and all its villages.

NKJ Numbers 21:25 So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages.

NRS Numbers 21:25 Israel took all these towns, and Israel settled in all the towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages.

NAB Numbers 21:25 Israel seized all the towns here and settled in these towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon and all its dependencies.

NJB Numbers 21:25 Israel took all these towns. Israel occupied all the Amorite towns, Heshbon and all its dependencies,

GWN Numbers 21:25 Israel took all those Amorite cities, including Heshbon and all its villages, and lived in them.

- dwelt: Nu 21:31 32:33-42 De 2:12
- in Heshbon: Heshbon was situated, according to Eusebius, twenty miles east of Jordan; and Jerome, who places it at the same distance, says it was, in his time, a very considerable city. It still subsists, in ruins, under the name of Heshban. Song 7:4 Isa 15:4 16:8,9 Jer 48:2,34,45
- villages: Heb. daughters, Eze 16:46,49,53
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Heshbon the city of Sihon

Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites(see [note above](#)), **in Heshbon, and in all her villages**

ISBE on [Heshbon](#) - hesh'-bon (cheshbon; Hesebon): The royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites, taken and occupied by the Israelites under Moses (Numbers 21:25, etc.). It lay on the southern border of Gad (Joshua 13:26), and was one of the cities fortified by Reuben (Numbers 32:37). It is reckoned among the cities of Gad given to the Merarite Levites (Joshua 21:39). In later literature (Isaiah 15:4; Isaiah 16:8 Jeremiah 48:2, 34, 45; Jeremiah 49:3) it is referred to as a city of Moab. It passed again into Jewish hands, and is mentioned by Josephus (Ant., XIII, xv, 4) as among their possessions in the country of Moab under Alexander Janneus. The city with its district called Hesebonitis, was also under the jurisdiction of Herod the Great (Ant., XV, vii, 5, where it is described as lying in the Peraea). Eusebius, Onomasticon places it 20 Roman miles from the Jordan. It is represented by the modern Chesban, a ruined site in the mountains over against Jericho, about 16 miles East of the Jordan. It stands on the edge of Wady Chesban in a position of great strength, about 600 ft. above `Ain Chesban. The ruins, dating mainly from Roman times, spread over two hills, respectively 2,930 ft. and 2,954 ft. in height. There are remains of a temple overlooked from the West by those of a castle. There is also a large ruined reservoir; while the spring in the valley forms a succession of pools (Songs 7:4). The city is approached from the valley by a steep path passing through a cutting in the rock, which may have been closed by a gate (Conder, Heth and Moab, 142). On a hill to the West, el-Kurmiyeh, is a collection of dolmens and stone circles (Musil, Arabia Petrea, I, 383).

Related Resources

- American Tract Society [Heshbon](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Heshbon](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Heshbon](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Heshbon](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Heshbon](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Heshbon](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Heshbon](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Heshbon \(2\)](#) [Heshbon](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Heshbon](#)

Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon.

BGT Numbers 21:26 σπιν γ ρ Εσεβων π λης Σηων το βασιλ ως τ ν Αμορρα ων κα ο τος πολ μησεν βασιλ α

Μωαβ τ πρ τερον κα λαβον π σαν τ ν γ ν α το π Αροηρ ως Αρνων

NET Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites. Now he had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all of his land from his control, as far as the Arnon.

NLT Numbers 21:26 Heshbon had been the capital of King Sihon of the Amorites. He had defeated a former Moabite king and seized all his land as far as the Arnon River.

ESV Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon.

NIV Numbers 21:26 Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken from him all his land as far as the Arnon.

KJV Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

YLT Numbers 21:26 for Heshbon is a city of Sihon king of the Amorite, and he hath fought against the former king of Moab, and taketh all his land out of his hand, unto Arnon;

LXE Numbers 21:26 For Esebon is the city of Seon king of the Amorites; and he before fought against the king of Moab, and they took all his land, from Aroer to Arnon.

ASV Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto the Arnon.

CSB Numbers 21:26 Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken control of all his land as far as the Arnon.

NKJ Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon.

NRS Numbers 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and captured all his land as far as the Arnon.

NAB Numbers 21:26 Now Heshbon was the capital of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had seized all his land from Jazer to the Arnon.

NJB Numbers 21:26 Heshbon being the capital of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had made war on the first king of Moab and captured all his territory as far as the Arnon.

GWN Numbers 21:26 Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites. He had fought the former king of Moab and had taken all his land up to the Arnon Valley.

- Arnon: Arnon is a stream which takes its rise in the mountains of Moab, and, by a north-west course, during which it receives the waters of several streams, runs into the Dead sea. It is now called Wady Modjeb, and divides the province of Pelka from that of Kerek, as it formerly divided the kingdoms of the Moabites and Amorites. Its principal source is at a short distance to the north-east of Katrane, a station of the Syrian Hadj, where it is called Seyl Sayde; and lower down it receives the name of Esseim el Kereim, or Szefye. Nu 21:26

For Heshbon was the city of Sihon (see [note](#)), king of the Amorites (see [note above](#)), who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon.

NET NOTE - There is a justice, always, in the divine plan for the conquest of the land. Modern students of the Bible often think that the conquest passages are crude and unjust. But an understanding of the ancient Near East is critical here. This Sihon was not a part of the original population of the land. He himself invaded the territory and destroyed the population of Moab that was indigenous there and established his own kingdom. The ancient history is filled with such events; it is the way of life they chose—conquer or be conquered. For Israel to defeat them was in part a turning of their own devices back on their heads—“those that live by the sword will die by the sword.” Sihon knew this, and he did not wait, but took the war to Israel. Israel wanted to pass through, not fight. But now they would either fight or be pushed into the gorge. So God used Israel to defeat Sihon, who had no claim to the land, as part of divine judgment.

Numbers 21:27 Therefore those who use proverbs say, "Come to Heshbon! Let it be built! So let the city of Sihon be established.

BGT Numbers 21:27 δι το το ρο σιν ο α νιγματιστα λθετε ε ς Εσεβων να ο κοδομηθ κα κατασκευασθ π λις Σηων

NET Numbers 21:27 That is why those who speak in proverbs say, "Come to Heshbon, let it be built. Let the city of Sihon be established!

NLT Numbers 21:27 Therefore, the ancient poets wrote this about him: "Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt! Let the city of Sihon be restored.

ESV Numbers 21:27 Therefore the ballad singers say, "Come to Heshbon, let it be built; let the city of Sihon be established.

NIV Numbers 21:27 That is why the poets say: "Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt; let Sihon's city be restored.

KJV Numbers 21:27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared:

YLT Numbers 21:27 therefore those using similes say -- 'Enter ye Heshbon, Let the city of Sihon be built and ready,

LXE Numbers 21:27 Therefore say they who deal in dark speeches, Come to Esebon, that the city of Seon may be built and prepared.

ASV Numbers 21:27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come ye to Heshbon; Let the city of Sihon be built and established:

CSB Numbers 21:27 Therefore the poets say: Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt; let the city of Sihon be restored.

NKJ Numbers 21:27 Therefore those who speak in proverbs say: "Come to Heshbon, let it be built; Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

NRS Numbers 21:27 Therefore the ballad singers say, "Come to Heshbon, let it be built; let the city of Sihon be established.

NAB Numbers 21:27 That is why the poets say: "Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt, let Sihon's capital be firmly constructed.

NJB Numbers 21:27 Hence the poets say: Come to Heshbon! Let the city of Sihon be rebuilt on firm foundations!

GWN Numbers 21:27 This is why the poets say: "Come to Heshbon! Rebuild it! Restore Sihon's city!

- Nu 21:14 Isa 14:4 Hab 2:6
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Therefore those who use proverbs say, "Come to Heshbon! Let it be built! So let the city of Sihon(see [note](#)) be established.

Numbers 21:28 "For a fire went forth from Heshbon, A flame from the town of Sihon; It devoured Ar of Moab, The dominant heights of the Arnon.

BGT Numbers 21:28 τι π ρ ξ λθεν ξ Εσεβων φλ ξ κ π λεως Σηων κα κατ φαγεν ως Μωαβ κα κατ πιεν στ λας Αρνων

NET Numbers 21:28 For fire went out from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It has consumed Ar of Moab and the lords of the high places of Arnon.

NLT Numbers 21:28 A fire flamed forth from Heshbon, a blaze from the city of Sihon. It burned the city of Ar in Moab; it destroyed the rulers of the Arnon heights.

ESV Numbers 21:28 For fire came out from Heshbon, flame from the city of Sihon. It devoured Ar of Moab,

and swallowed the heights of the Arnon.

NIV Numbers 21:28 "Fire went out from Heshbon, a blaze from the city of Sihon. It consumed Ar of Moab, the citizens of Arnon's heights.

KJV Numbers 21:28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon.

YLT Numbers 21:28 For fire hath gone out from Heshbon, A flame from the city of Sihon, It hath consumed Ar of Moab, Owners of the high places of Arnon.

LXE Numbers 21:28 For a fire has gone forth from Esehbon, a flame from the city of Seon, and has consumed as far as Moab, and devoured the pillars of Arnon.

ASV Numbers 21:28 For a fire is gone out of Heshbon, A flame from the city of Sihon: It hath devoured Ar of Moab, The lords of the high places of the Arnon.

CSB Numbers 21:28 For fire came out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It consumed Ar of Moab, the lords of Arnon's heights.

NKJ Numbers 21:28 "For fire went out from Heshbon, A flame from the city of Sihon; It consumed Ar of Moab, The lords of the heights of the Arnon.

NRS Numbers 21:28 For fire came out from Heshbon, flame from the city of Sihon. It devoured Ar of Moab, and swallowed up the heights of the Arnon.

NAB Numbers 21:28 For fire went forth from Heshbon and a blaze from the city of Sihon; It consumed the cities of Moab and swallowed up the high places of the Arnon.

NJB Numbers 21:28 For fire has burst from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon, devouring Ar of Moab, engulfing the heights of the Arnon.

GWN Numbers 21:28 Fire came out of Heshbon, flames from Sihon's city. They destroyed Ar of Moab, the rulers of Arnon's worship sites.

- a fire: Jud 9:20 Isa 10:16 Jer 48:45,46 Am 1:4,7,10,12,14 2:2,5
- Ar of Moab: Nu 21:15 De 2:9,18 Isa 15:1,2
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For a fire went forth from Heshbon, A flame from the town of Sihon(see [note](#)); It devoured Ar of Moab, The dominant heights of the Arnon

Numbers 21:29 "Woe to you, O Moab! You are ruined, O people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, To an Amorite king, Sihon.

BGT Numbers 21:29 ο α σοι Μωαβ π λου λα ς Χαμω ς πεδ θησαν ο υ ο α τ ν διασ ζεσθαι κα α θυγατ ρε ς α τ ν α χμ λωτοι τ βασιλε τ ν Αμορρα ων Σηων

NET Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, Moab. You are ruined, O people of Chemosh! He has made his sons fugitives, and his daughters the prisoners of King Sihon of the Amorites.

NLT Numbers 21:29 What sorrow awaits you, O people of Moab! You are finished, O worshipers of Chemosh! Chemosh has left his sons as refugees, his daughters as captives of Sihon, the Amorite king.

ESV Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, O Moab! You are undone, O people of Chemosh! He has made his sons fugitives, and his daughters captives, to an Amorite king, Sihon.

NIV Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, O Moab! You are destroyed, O people of Chemosh! He has given up his sons as fugitives and his daughters as captives to Sihon king of the Amorites.

KJV Numbers 21:29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

YLT Numbers 21:29 Woe to thee, O Moab, Thou hast perished, O people of Chemosh, He hath given his

sons who escape -- Also his daughters -- Into captivity, to a king of the Amorite -- Sihon!

LXE Numbers 21:29 Woe to thee, Moab; thou art lost, thou people of Chamos: their sons are sold for preservation, and their daughters are captives to Seon king of the Amorites.

ASV Numbers 21:29 Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: He hath given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, Unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

CSB Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, Moab! You have been destroyed, people of Chemosh! He gave up his sons as refugees, and his daughters into captivity to Sihon the Amorite king.

NKJ Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, Moab! You have perished, O people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, To Sihon king of the Amorites.

NRS Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, O Moab! You are undone, O people of Chemosh! He has made his sons fugitives, and his daughters captives, to an Amorite king, Sihon.

NAB Numbers 21:29 Woe to you, O Moab! You are ruined, O people of Chemosh! He let his sons become fugitives and his daughters be taken captive by the Amorite king Sihon.

NJB Numbers 21:29 Oh, unhappy Moab! People of Chemosh, you are lost! He has resigned his sons as fugitives, and his daughters as prisoners to Sihon king of the Amorites.

GWN Numbers 21:29 How horrible it is for you, Moab! You are destroyed, you people of the god Chemosh. Chemosh let his sons become refugees and he let his daughters become prisoners of King Sihon of the Amorites.

- Jdg 11:24 1Ki 11:7,33 2Ki 23:13 Jer 48:7,13,46 1Co 8:4,5
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Inscription of Mesha King of Moab (see [notes below](#))

Woe to you, O Moab! You are ruined, O people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, To an Amorite king, Sihon (see [note](#))

NET NOTE - The note of holy war emerges here as the victory is a victory over the local gods as well as over the people.

Note on Inscription by Mesha King of Moab - Mesha was king of Moab in 9 century BC and the stele celebrates King Mesha's victory over the "son of Omri" probably a reference to Joram (Jehoram). On the stele are engravings that boast of Mesha's victories giving "glory" Chemosh. It describes the looting of the Jewish Temple vessels. The Stele has the earliest known reference to the Name "Yahweh" outside the Old Testament. Finally, the stele supports the Biblical account of events in Joram's reign in 2 Ki 3:21-27 which describes the king of Moab offering his son for sacrifice after which a "great wrath came upon Israel."

QUESTION - [Who was Chemosh?](#)

Answer: Chemosh was the god of the Moabites (Numbers 21:29; Jeremiah 48:7, 13, 46). Scripture calls him "the abomination of Moab" (1 Kings 11:7). Unfortunately, Chemosh-worship was introduced into Israelite culture by King Solomon, who had wives from other cultures who turned his heart to other gods (1 Kings 11:4-7). Chemosh was one of those gods worshiped by Solomon's wives. The cult of Chemosh was eventually destroyed in Judah by King Josiah (2 Kings 23).

The meaning of the name *Chemosh* is not understood, though some scholars believe it may have meant "destroyer" or "subduer." Chemosh was also seen as a fish-god. He was the national deity of the [Moabites](#) and the [Ammonites](#), and, according to the Moabite Stone (the Mesha Stele), Chemosh was associated with the goddess Ashteroth, another false god worshiped by wayward Israelites. Chemosh is thought to have been a deity similar to [Baal](#), and there is also evidence, both from the Moabite Stone and from Scripture, that Chemosh may have been the same deity as the Ammonite [Moloch](#) (1 Kings 11:7, 33). At least, Chemosh and Moloch were two manifestations of the same false god. King Solomon built "high places" to both gods in the same location, the mountain east of Jerusalem. The worship of Chemosh was truly an abomination. One place in Scripture records Chemosh demanding human sacrifice: in the days of Judah's King Jehoram, the king of Moab faced military defeat, and the Moabite ruler "took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall" (2 Kings 3:27).

Chemosh also features in John Milton's epic poem [Paradise Lost](#). In a passage about false gods, Milton refers to Chemosh as a god whom the Israelites worshiped with "lustful orgies" and "wanton rites" and calls Chemosh "th' obscene dread of Moab's sons" (Book 1, line 406). Milton also mentions King Josiah, who "drove them thence to Hell" by abolishing the practice of Chemosh-worship in

Pagan Deities in the Old Testament		
Deity	Worshiped in	References
Adrammelech	Sepharvaim	2 Kgs 17:31
Amon	Egypt	Jer 46:25; Nah 3:8
Anammelech	Sepharvaim	2 Kgs 17:31
Apis	Egypt	Jer 46:15
Asherah	Canaan	Deut 7:5; 16:21; Judg 6:25–30; 1 Kgs 15:13; 16:33; 18:19; 2 Kgs 13:6; 17:16; 18:4; 21:3, 7; 23:4–15; 2 Chr 15:16, etc.
Ashima	Hamath	2 Kgs 17:30
Ashtoreth/Astarte/Ishtar/"Queen of Heaven"	Assyria, Babylon, Canaan, Egypt, Phoenicia	Judg 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sam 7:3–4; 12:10; 31:10; 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 11:5; Jer 7:18; 44:17–19, 25
Baal	Canaan	Num 22:41; 25:3; Judg 2:11; 6:25–32; 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kgs 16:31–32; 18:25–26; 2 Kgs 3:2; 10:26–28; 2 Chr 17:3; 23:17; Jer 2:8; 7:9; 19:5; Hos 2:8, 13; 11:2; Zeph 1:4, etc.
Baal-zebul	Philistia	2 Kgs 1:2, 3, 6, 16
Bel/Marduk	Babylon	Isa 46:1; Jer 50:2; 51:44
Chemosh	Moab	Num 21:29; Judg 11:24; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46
Dagon	Philistia	Judg 16:23; 1 Sam 5:2–7; 1 Chr 10:10
Kaiwan	Babylon	Am 5:26
Milcom	Ammon	1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 49:1, 3; Zeph 1:5
Molech	Ammon	Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35
Nebo	Babylon	Isa 46:1
Nergal	Cuth	2 Kgs 17:30
Nibhaz	Ivvah	2 Kgs 17:31
Nisroch	Assyria	2 Kgs 19:37; Isa 37:38
Rimmon/Hadad-rimmon	Aram	2 Kgs 5:18; Zech 12:11
Sakkuth	Babylon	Am 5:26
Succoth-benoth	Babylon	2 Kgs 17:30

Tammuz	Babylon, Sumer	Ezek 8:14
Tartak	Ivvah	2 Kgs 17:31

Numbers 21:30 "But we have cast them down, Heshbon is ruined as far as Dibon, Then we have laid waste even to Nophah, Which reaches to Medeba."

BGT Numbers 21:30 κα τ σπ ρμα α τ ν πολε ται Εσεβων ως Δαιβων κα α γυνα κες τι προσεξ καυσαν π ρ π Μωαβ

NET Numbers 21:30 We have overpowered them; Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon. We have shattered them as far as Nophah, which reaches to Medeba."

NLT Numbers 21:30 We have utterly destroyed them, from Heshbon to Dibon. We have completely wiped them out as far away as Nophah and Medeba. "

ESV Numbers 21:30 So we overthrew them; Heshbon, as far as Dibon, perished; and we laid waste as far as Nophah; fire spread as far as Medeba."

NIV Numbers 21:30 "But we have overthrown them; Heshbon is destroyed all the way to Dibon. We have demolished them as far as Nophah, which extends to Medeba."

KJV Numbers 21:30 We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba.

YLT Numbers 21:30 And we shoot them, Perished hath Heshbon unto Dibon, And we make desolate unto Nophah, Which is unto Medeba.'

LXE Numbers 21:30 And their seed shall perish from Esebon to Daebon; and their women have yet farther kindled a fire against Moab.

ASV Numbers 21:30 We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, And we have laid waste even unto Nophah, Which reacheth unto Medeba.

CSB Numbers 21:30 We threw them down; Heshbon has been destroyed as far as Dibon. We caused desolation as far as Nophah, which reaches as far as Medeba.

NKJ Numbers 21:30 "But we have shot at them; Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon. Then we laid waste as far as Nophah, Which reaches to Medeba."

NRS Numbers 21:30 So their posterity perished from Heshbon to Dibon, and we laid waste until fire spread to Medeba."

NAB Numbers 21:30 Their plowland is ruined from Heshbon to Dibon; Ar is laid waste; fires blaze as far as Medeba."

NJB Numbers 21:30 Their posterity has been destroyed from Heshbon all the way to Dibon, and we have lit a fire all the way from Nophah to Medeba.

GWN Numbers 21:30 But we shot the Amorites full of arrows. From Heshbon to Dibon they all died. We destroyed everyone and everything between Nophah and Medeba."

- have shot: Ge 49:23 2Sa 11:24 Ps 18:14
- Dibon: Nu 32:34 Jos 13:17 Isa 15:2,9 Jer 48:18,22
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But we have cast them down, Heshbon is ruined as far as Dibon - "A place name also mentioned in the Mesha Stele from Moab (see [above](#))." (FSB)

Then we have laid waste even to Nophah, Which reaches to Medeba."

Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites.

BGT Numbers 21:31 κατ κησεν δ Ισραηλ ν π σαις τα ς π λεσιν τ ν Αμορρα ων

NET Numbers 21:31 So the Israelites lived in the land of the Amorites.

NLT Numbers 21:31 So the people of Israel occupied the territory of the Amorites.

ESV Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites.

NIV Numbers 21:31 So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

KJV Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

YLT Numbers 21:31 And Israel dwelleth in the land of the Amorite,

LXE Numbers 21:31 And Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites.

ASV Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

CSB Numbers 21:31 So Israel lived in the Amorites' land.

NKJ Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

NRS Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

NAB Numbers 21:31 When Israel had settled in the land of the Amorites,

NJB Numbers 21:31 Thus Israel occupied the Amorites' territory.

GWN Numbers 21:31 So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

- Nu 32:33-42 De 3:16,17 Jos 12:1-6 13:8-12
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites (see [note above](#))

Numbers 21:32 Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

BGT Numbers 21:32 κα π στειλεν Μωυσ ς κατασκ ψασθαι τ ν Ιαζηρ κα κατελ βοντο α τ ν κα τ ς κ μας α τ ς κα ξ βαλον τ ν Αμορρα ον τ ν κατοικο ντα κε

NET Numbers 21:32 Moses sent spies to reconnoiter Jaazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

NLT Numbers 21:32 After Moses sent men to explore the Jazer area, they captured all the towns in the region and drove out the Amorites who lived there.

ESV Numbers 21:32 And Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

NIV Numbers 21:32 After Moses had sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its surrounding settlements and drove out the Amorites who were there.

KJV Numbers 21:32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

YLT Numbers 21:32 and Moses sendeth to spy out Jaazer, and they capture its villages, and dispossess the Amorite who is there,

LXE Numbers 21:32 And Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took it, and its villages, and cast out the Amorite that dwelt there.

ASV Numbers 21:32 And Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took the towns thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

CSB Numbers 21:32 After Moses sent spies to Jazer, Israel captured its villages and drove out the Amorites

who were there.

NKJ Numbers 21:32 Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who were there.

NRS Numbers 21:32 Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they captured its villages, and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

NAB Numbers 21:32 Moses sent spies to Jazer; Israel then captured it with its dependencies and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

NJB Numbers 21:32 Moses then sent men to reconnoitre Jazer, and Israel took it and its dependencies, evicting the Amorites who lived there.

GWN Numbers 21:32 After Moses sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its cities and villages and forced out the Amorites who were there.

- **Jazer:** Nu 32:1,35 Isa 16:8,9 Jer 48:32
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Possible Location of Jazer

Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites (see [note above](#)) **who were there** - Nu 32:34-36 records specifically that "The [sons of Gad](#) built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, and Atroth-shophan and **Jazer** and Jogbehah, and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep." It is a sound strategy that Joshua would not want to leave a threat behind him when the time came to cross the Jordan into Canaan.

Jazer "was a city of the Amorites east of the Jordan taken, along with its towns, by Moses, and occupied by the tribe of Gad (Nu 21:32 ; Nu 32:35). The country was very fertile, and its spacious pasture-lands attracted the flock-masters of Gad (Nu 32:1), the southern border of whose territory it marked (Joshua 13:25). It was assigned to the Merarite Levites (Joshua 21:39 ; 1 Chronicles 6:81). The place was reached by Joab when taking the census (2 Samuel 24:5). In the 40th year of King David mighty men of valor were found here to whom he entrusted the oversight in Reuben and Gad "for every matter pertaining to God, and run the affairs of the king" (1 Chronicles 26:32 f). The fruitfulness of the country is alluded to in Isaiah 16:8 f; Jeremiah 48:32 . ([ISBE](#))

Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan went out with all his people, for battle at Edrei.

BGT Numbers 21:33 κα πιστρ ψαντες ν βησαν δ ν τ ν ε ς Βασαν κα ξ λθεν Ωγ βασιλε ς τ ς Βασαν ε ς συν νησιν α το ς κα π ς λα ς α το ε ς π λεμον ε ς Εδραιν

NET Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the road to Bashan. And King Og of Bashan and all his forces marched out against them to do battle at Edrei.

NLT Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and marched up the road to Bashan, but King Og of Bashan and all his people attacked them at Edrei.

ESV Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

NIV Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet them in battle at Edrei.

KJV Numbers 21:33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

YLT Numbers 21:33 and turn and go up the way of Bashan, and Og king of Bashan cometh out to meet them, he and all his people, to battle, at Edrei.

LXE Numbers 21:33 And having returned, they went up the road that leads to Basan; and Og the king of Basan went forth to meet them, and all his people to war to Edrain.

ASV Numbers 21:33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

CSB Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og king of Bashan came out against them with his whole army to do battle at Edrei.

NKJ Numbers 21:33 And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

NRS Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up the road to Bashan; and King Og of Bashan came out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

NAB Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and went up along the road to Bashan. But Og, king of Bashan, advanced against them with all his people to give battle at Edrei.

NJB Numbers 21:33 They then turned and marched on Bashan. Og king of Bashan and all his people marched to meet them and give battle at Edrei.

GWN Numbers 21:33 Then they turned and followed the road that goes to Bashan. King Og of Bashan and all his troops came out to fight the Israelites at Edrei.

- they turned: De 3:1-6 29:7 Jos 13:12
- Bashan: De 32:14 Ps 22:12 68:15 Isa 33:9 Eze 27:6 39:18 Am 4:1
- Og: Nu 32:33 De 1:4 3:1 4:47 29:7 Jos 9:10 12:4 13:30
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Battle of Edrei - See Edrei in right upper corner

ISRAEL CONFRONTED BY OG AND ALL HIS PEOPLE

Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and [Og the king of Bashan](#) went out with all his people, for battle at Edrei - Moses gives more a parallel description in Deuteronomy 3:1 ""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.**"

FSB on Edrei - A city mentioned in association with the Rephaim on tablets found at the sites of the ancient cities Ugarit and Ashtaroth. The OT also couples these cities within the region of Bashan and associates them with the giant clan Rephaim (see Dt 1:4; Josh 12:4; 13:12).

Holman Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#) (bay' sshan) The northernmost region of Palestine east of the Jordan River (**ED**: see location in map above in top right hand corner). Though its precise extent cannot be determined with certainty, it was generally east of the Sea of Galilee. In the time of Moses it was ruled over by a king named Og, whom the Israelite army defeated (Numbers 21:33-35). It was assigned to the tribal area of Manasseh (Deuteronomy 3:13 ; Joshua 13:29-31). Probably on account of its frontier location, it changed hands several times during the course of Israelite history. It was known as a particularly fertile area (Deuteronomy 32:14 ; Ezekiel 39:18).

Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bashan](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bashan](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Bashan](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Bashan](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Bashan](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Bashan](#)
- American Tract Society [Edrei](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Edrei](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Edrei](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Edrei](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Edrei](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Edrei](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Edrei](#)

- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Edrei \(2\) Edrei](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Edrei](#)

Question: [Who was Og king of Bashan?](#)

Answer: Og king of Bashan was a mighty and infamous Amorite king in the days of Moses who fought the Israelites on their way to the [Promised Land](#). God granted the Israelites victory over King Og's forces, and Moses and the Israelites possessed Bashan, a fruitful land east of the Jordan River. The victory was significant because of the fearsome strength of Og and the relative inexperience of the Israelite forces.

Leading up to the Israelites' encounter with Og king of Bashan was a battle with another [Amorite](#) king, [Sihon](#). Moses had requested that Sihon allow the Israelites to pass through his land—they promised not to take any of the Amorites' resources along the way—but instead of granting permission, Sihon mustered his forces and attacked the Israelites. God enabled Moses and the people of Israel to defeat the Amorites and take their land (Numbers 21:21–31). Then the Israelites made their way toward Bashan, and King Og came out to confront them at Edrei (verse 33). The Israelites were frightened because Og's reputation preceded him. But God reassured Moses, saying, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land" (verse 34).

The battle between the forces of Og and Moses is described in greater detail in the book of Deuteronomy. There we read that Og was king over sixty fortified cities, all of which the Israelites captured (Deuteronomy 3:3–7). He was also a very large man—his bed was made of iron and was of enormous size: nine cubits long and four cubits wide (13.5 feet long and 6 feet wide). The inclusion of this detail emphasizes the size of Og. A man needing this size of bed was likely very tall—ten or eleven feet. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Og was one of the last of the Rephaites (Deuteronomy 3:11), which means he was strong and tall (see Deuteronomy 2:20–21).

The [Rephaites \(or Rephaim\)](#) were a group of people who lived in Canaan and elsewhere at the time of Moses and Joshua. The word *Rephaites* is not an ethnic but rather a descriptive term; it literally means "terrible ones." The Rephaim were giants and fierce fighters. Earlier, when the Israelites had first tried to enter the Promised Land, the spies reported the land was populated by giants, whom they called "[Nephilim](#)" and "sons of Anak" (Numbers 13:32–33).

Og king of Bashan was one of the last of this race of giants. Goliath, the giant who fought David, was likely another. Og and his sons all lost their lives in their foolish opposition to God's people (Numbers 21:35). Despite King Og's great size and strength, God gave Israel's army the victory, and they possessed the land of Bashan. The half-tribe of Manasseh inherited Og's territory (Joshua 13:29–30). There is no obstacle too large for God; there is nothing impossible for Him (Matthew 19:26). God does not quail before giants, and neither should His children [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [Who were the Anakim / Anakites? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who were the Rephaim? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is there any evidence for the giants mentioned in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who / what were the Nephilim?](#)
- [Who were the sons of God and daughters of men in Genesis 6:1-4?](#)
- [Are the demons the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim?](#)

Numbers 21:34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon."

BGT Numbers 21:34 κα ε πεν κ ριος πρ ς Μωυσ ν μ φοβηθ ς α τ ν τι ε ς τ ς χε ρ ς σου παραδ δωκα α τ ν κα π ντα τ ν λα ν α το κα π σαν τ ν γ ν α το κα ποι σε ς α τ καθ ς πο ησας τ Σηων βασιλε τ ν Αμορρα ων ς κατ κει ν Εσεβων

NET Numbers 21:34 And the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand. You will do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.

NLT Numbers 21:34 The LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over to you, along with all his people and his land. Do the same to him as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled

in Heshbon."

ESV Numbers 21:34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon."

NIV Numbers 21:34 The LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over to you, with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon."

KJV Numbers 21:34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

YLT Numbers 21:34 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'Fear him not, for into thy hand I have given him, and all his people, and his land, and thou hast done to him as thou hast done to Sihon king of the Amorite, who is dwelling in Heshbon.'

LXE Numbers 21:34 And the Lord said to Moses, Fear him not; for I have delivered him and all his people, and all his land, into thy hands; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst to Seon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Esebon.

ASV Numbers 21:34 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.

CSB Numbers 21:34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to you along with his whole army and his land. Do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon."

NKJ Numbers 21:34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon."

NRS Numbers 21:34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him; for I have given him into your hand, with all his people, and all his land. You shall do to him as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon."

NAB Numbers 21:34 The LORD, however, said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him; for into your hand I will deliver him with all his people and his land. Do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon."

NJB Numbers 21:34 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have put him, all his people and his country at your mercy. Treat him as you treated Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.'

GWN Numbers 21:34 The LORD said to Moses, "Don't be afraid of him. I'll hand him, all his troops, and his land over to you. Do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon."

- Fear him: Nu 14:9 De 3:1-3,11 20:3 31:6 Jos 10:8,25 Isa 41:13
- for I have: De 3:3 7:24 Jos 8:7 Jud 11:30 1Sa 23:4 2Sa 5:19 1Ki 20:13,28 2Ki 3:18
- thou shalt: Nu 21:24 Ps 135:10,11
- as thou: Nu 21:24,25
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

EXHORTATION NOT TO FEAR BUT TRUST YAHWEH'S PROMISE

But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him ([Og the king of Bashan](#)) - This encouragement to not fear the King of Og, parallels the words of the faithful Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh (Nu 14:6) in Nu 14:9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

One reason they might fear [Og the king of Bashan](#) is alluded to in Dt 3:11 where we read "For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the [the Rephaim](#). Behold, his bedstead was an iron bedstead; it is in Rabbah of the sons of Ammon. Its length was nine cubits and its width four cubits by ordinary cubit." Gotquestions adds that "Giants were widely scattered through Canaan, but were

known by different local names, including [Rephaim](#), Zuzim, Emim, and Anakim. Deuteronomy 2:20–21 says the [Rephaim](#) were strong and tall, like the Anakites. [Og the king of Bashan](#), was described as the last of the Rephaim in his land (Deuteronomy 3:11), and his bed was thirteen feet long and six feet wide." Recall that it was the "giants" that struck great fear in the 10 unbelieving spies Moses had sent into the promised land, Moses recording their fearful words "**There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.**" (Nu 13:33+, context Nu 13:31-33) On this occasion Yahweh offers a an exhortation to not fear which would serve as to deter the sons of Israel seeing themselves as "grasshoppers" in the sight of [Og the king of Bashan!](#)

For (term of explanation) **I have given him into your hand** - Yahweh gives Moses the reason Israel did not need to fear the King of Og. This recalls Yahweh's promise to Israel almost 40 years earlier when He declared "'I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you." (Ex 23:31+)

Promises of Yahweh to give the enemy **into your hand** - Gen. 14:20; Exod. 23:31; Num. 21:34; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 2:30; Deut. 3:2; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 20:13; Jos. 6:2; Jos. 8:1; Jos. 8:7; Jos. 8:18; Jos. 10:19; Jos. 24:8; Jos. 24:11; Jdg. 4:7; Jdg. 18:10; Jdg. 20:28; 1 Sam. 23:4; 1 Sam. 24:4; 1 Sam. 24:18; 1 Sam. 26:8; 2 Sam. 5:19; 1 Ki. 20:13; 1 Ki. 20:28; 2 Ki. 3:18; 1 Chr. 14:10; 2 Chr. 16:8; 2 Chr. 18:14; 2 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 31:5; Isa. 47:6; Ezek. 23:31; Dan. 2:38

And all his people and his land - So not just the army but the entire populace was given over to the Israelites.

And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon (see [note](#)), **king of the Amorites** (see [note above](#)), **who lived at Heshbon** - Moses recounted this event in Deuteronomy 3:2 writing "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 Heshbon.'"

Numbers 21:35 So they killed him and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land.

BGT Numbers 21:35 κα π τ ᾶ ξεν α τ ν κα το ς υ ο ς α το κα π ν τ α τ ν λα ν α το ω ς το μ καταλιπε ν α το ζω γρε αν κα κληρον μησαν τ ν γ ν α τ ν

NET Numbers 21:35 So they defeated Og, his sons, and all his people, until there were no survivors, and they possessed his land.

NLT Numbers 21:35 And Israel killed King Og, his sons, and all his subjects; not a single survivor remained. Then Israel occupied their land.

ESV Numbers 21:35 So they defeated him and his sons and all his people, until he had no survivor left. And they possessed his land.

NIV Numbers 21:35 So they struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army, leaving them no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

KJV Numbers 21:35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

YLT Numbers 21:35 And they smite him, and his sons, and all his people, until he hath not left to him a remnant, and they possess his land.

LXE Numbers 21:35 And he smote him and his sons, and all his people, until he left none of his to be taken alive; and they inherited his land.

ASV Numbers 21:35 So they smote him, and his sons and all his people, until there was none left him remaining: and they possessed his land.

CSB Numbers 21:35 So they struck him, his sons, and his whole army until no one was left, and they took possession of his land.

NKJ Numbers 21:35 So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.

NRS Numbers 21:35 So they killed him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left; and they took possession of his land.

NAB Numbers 21:35 So they struck him down with his sons and all his people, until not a survivor was left to him, and they took possession of his land.

NJB Numbers 21:35 So they pressed their attack against him, his sons and all his people until there was no one left alive. And they took possession of his country.

GWN Numbers 21:35 The Israelites defeated him, his sons, and all his troops, leaving no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

- De 3:3-17 29:7,8 Jos 12:4-6 13:12 Ps 135:10-12 136:17-21 Ro 8:37
- [Numbers 21 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL BLOTS OUT BASHAN

So they killed him ([Og the king of Bashan](#)) and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land - We have more detail in Dt 3:3 "So the LORD our God delivered Og also, king of Bashan, with all his people into our hand, and **we smote 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 unwalled 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 spoil of the cities we took as our booty."