

**Exegetical Notes, Numbers 21:10-35**  
**"If God Is With Us"**

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**NUMBERS 21:10-35**

**Verses 10-20**

*The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth. <sup>11</sup> Then they set out from Oboth and camped in Iye Abarim, in the wilderness that faces Moab toward the sunrise. <sup>12</sup> From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says:*

*“ . . . Zahab in Suphah and the ravines,  
the Arnon <sup>15</sup> and the slopes of the ravines  
that lead to the settlement of Ar  
and lie along the border of Moab.”*

*<sup>16</sup> 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.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Then Israel sang this song:*

*“Spring up, O well!  
Sing about it,  
<sup>18</sup> 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 wilderness to Mattanah, <sup>19</sup> from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, <sup>20</sup> and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where the top of Pisgah overlooks the wasteland.*

- As God had commanded, the Israelites wandered from place to place.
- "The Book of Wars of YHWH" was a collection of songs about the battles the people faced on their way to the Promised Land. It is lost.
- When Israel faced a special need, like the need for water, God provided for that need and Israel praised God for his response to their need. The song about the well (verses 17-18) is an example of such a song of praise.

### Verses 20-33

*Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites:*

<sup>22</sup> *“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.”*

<sup>23</sup> *But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the wilderness against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> Israel captured all the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements. <sup>26</sup> 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.*

<sup>27</sup> *That is why the poets say:*

*“Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt;  
let Sihon’s city be restored.*

<sup>28</sup> *“Fire went out from Heshbon,  
a blaze from the city of Sihon.  
It consumed Ar of Moab,  
the citizens of Arnon’s heights.*

<sup>29</sup> *Woe to you, Moab!  
You are destroyed, people of Chemosh!  
He has given up his sons as fugitives  
and his daughters as captives  
to Sihon king of the Amorites.*

<sup>30</sup> ***“But we have overthrown them;  
Heshbon’s dominion has been destroyed all the way to Dibon.  
We have demolished them as far as Nophah,  
which extends to Medeba.”***

<sup>31</sup> ***So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.***

<sup>32</sup> ***After Moses had sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its surrounding settlements and drove out the Amorites who were there.***

- When the Israelites came to the border of the territory of King Sihon, they asked for permission to pass through the area peacefully, but Sihon denied them that permission and came out against them with his entire army. The Israelites defeated Sihon in battle. King Sihon was executed and Israel claimed all his territory. Israel settled in this area, claiming it as their own.
- The song, verses 27-30, is about the battle in which Sihon was defeated. It may come from the lost book mentioned in verse 14.

#### **Verses 34-35**

***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.***

<sup>34</sup> ***The LORD said to Moses, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon.”***

<sup>35</sup> ***So they struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army, leaving them no survivors. And they took possession of his land.***

- Israel then moved on to capture the territory of Og. God told them not to be afraid, for he had given this territory into their hands as well. Israel was successful because God was with them.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *If God Is With Us*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)