

Numbers 21:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through—Unlike Edom's refusal (Numbers 20:18-21), Sihon's rejection escalated to aggression. **But Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz** (יהַז, Yahtsah)—This wasn't mere border defense but offensive warfare. Deuteronomy 2:30 reveals God hardened Sihon's heart, creating necessary cause for Israel's conquest.

Jahaz became the first major battle for the Promised Land, though technically in Transjordan. Sihon's aggression transformed Israel from wanderers into warriors, from request-makers into conquerors. God orchestrated circumstances so Israel's inheritance came through victory, not negotiation—preparing them for Canaan's battles.

Historical Context

Jahaz was in the Moabite plateau, later assigned to Reuben (Joshua 13:18). This battle (c. 1406 BC) marked Israel's transformation into a military power. The Moabite Stone (Mesha Stele, 9th century BC) mentions Jahaz, confirming the site's historical significance in Transjordan conflicts.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. When has God turned opposition into opportunity for conquest in your spiritual life?
2. How do forced battles sometimes prepare you for future challenges better than negotiated peace would?
3. Where might God be hardening opposition to move you from passive waiting to active faith?

Interlinear Text

בְּגַבְּלוֹן עַבְרֵר בַּיְשָׁרָאֵל אֶת סִיחָן נָתָן | אַל
through his border to pass Israel to pass | And Sihon would not suffer H3808 H5414 H853 H3478 H5674 H1366

לְקַבֵּב אֶת יְאָסָף עַמּוֹ וְעַמּוֹ אֶת סִיחָן כָּל אֶת
against and went out all his people and went out gathered And Sihon H622 H5511 H853 H3605 H5971 H3318 H7125

בַּיְשָׁרָאֵל: וְלֹא קָם יְהוָה בְּמִדְבָּר בְּהַר
Israel and fought to Jahaz and he came into the wilderness Israel H3478 H3898 H3096 H935 H4057 H3478

Additional Cross-References

Judges 11:20 (References Israel): But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

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