

# Numbers 21:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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**Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say** (המשלים, ha-moshelim, "the parable-makers")—Moses quotes an ancient victory song, possibly Amorite, celebrating Sihon's earlier conquest of Heshbon from Moab. **Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared**—The taunt invited settlement in newly conquered territory. Ironically, Israel now sings the victor's song after defeating Sihon himself.

Scripture preserves pagan poetry to demonstrate historical reversal. The conqueror becomes conquered; the boast becomes epitaph. Israel's use of Amorite victory songs to celebrate Amorite defeat shows divine irony—history's wheel turns under God's hand.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern victory songs were common (cf. Exodus 15, Judges 5). This fragment suggests Amorites had their own bardic tradition. Moses' quotation demonstrates that oral poetry transmitted historical memory across cultures, and biblical writers engaged with extra-biblical sources while maintaining inspired authority.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. Where have you seen boastful victories reversed by God's justice and sovereignty?
2. How does God's ironic use of enemy songs and circumstances encourage you when opponents seem triumphant?
3. What 'proverbs' or cultural sayings might God be ironically fulfilling in unexpected ways around you?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאָמַרְוּ	בְּאֹםֶת	בְּאֹםֶת	וְשָׁבְּ וְ
H5921	H3651	say	Wherefore they that speak in proverbs
	H559		H4911
תָּבִּין	עִיר	סִיחוֹן:	
בָּנָה	וְתַכְּבִּגְנָה	לְתִבְנֵה הַ	
be built	and prepared	let the city	of Sihon
H1129	H3559	H5892	H5511

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