

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

Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say (הַמְשֵׁלִים, 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

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

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

עַל	יֵאמְרוּ	הַמְשָׁלִים	בֹּאוּ	חֲשֹׁב וְ
H5921	H3651			
	say	Wherefore they that speak in proverbs	Come	into Heshbon
	H559	H4911	H935	H2809
תִּבְנֶה	וְתִכְּוֶן	עַיִר	סִיחֹן:	
be built	and prepared	let the city	of Sihon	
H1129	H3559	H5892	H5511	
