

# Numbers 21:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon**—This poetic metaphor describes Sihon's military devastation of Moab. **It hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon** (בָּאָלִים בָּמוֹת אַרְנוֹן, ba'ale bamot Arnon)—The "lords" (ba'alim) likely refers to both political rulers and cultic officiants at Canaanite high places. Fire imagery evokes total military destruction.

Ancient victory songs used cosmic imagery—Sihon's conquest depicted as divine fire consuming all opposition. Israel inherited not just territory but the symbolic language of conquest, now redirected toward Yahweh's purposes. The 'fire from Heshbon' would be surpassed by the fire of God's presence leading Israel (Numbers 9:15-16).

## Historical Context

Ar was Moab's ancient capital. The 'high places' (bamot) were elevated worship sites central to Canaanite religion—combining political and religious authority. Sihon's conquest destroyed both Moab's political power and cultic centers, leaving the region ripe for Israelite occupation.

## Related Passages

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

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does God co-opt enemy imagery and language to accomplish His purposes?
2. What 'fires' of destruction in your life has God transformed into preparation for His presence and blessing?
3. How can you redeem cultural symbols and language for gospel purposes without compromising truth?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	אָשָׁ	אָשָׁ	וַיֵּצֵא	הַמִּחְשָׁבָה	וְלֹ	לִפְנֵי	הַמִּקְרָאִ	תְּ	סִיחַ	
H3588	For there is a fire	H784	H3318	H2809	H3852	H7151	from the city	H5511	of Sihon	
אָכְלָה	אָרְבָּן:	בְּמִזְרָחֵ	בְּעֵדֶל	מִזְרָחֵ	עַד	רַ	אָכְלָה			
it hath consumed	Ar	of Moab	H1167	H1116			of Arnon	H769		
H398	H6144	H4124								

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 21:15** (Parallel theme): And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.