

## Who was Sihon, king of the Amorites?

Sihon was a king of the Amorites, a pagan nation located east of the Jordan River near the Promised Land during the time of Moses. The city from which Sihon, king of the Amorites, ruled was called Heshbon. This city and its king were so famous that people wrote songs about them (Numbers 21:27-30). King Sihon was an enemy of the Israelites.

Sihon had conquered the king of Moab and had taken his land (Numbers 21:26). Later, when the Israelites asked to pass peacefully through Sihon's land, he refused them passage and came out to fight them (verse 23). But Israel under Moses' leadership fought back, defeated Sihon, and took all the land he had taken from the Moabite king, "from the Arnon to the Jabbok" (verse 24), two boundary rivers.

Later, the Israelites were opposed by the nation of Bashan, and God encouraged Moses to be unafraid of Og, the king of Bashan, by reminding him of the defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Do not fear [Og], for I have given him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Hesbon'" (Numbers 21:34). God fulfilled this promise and gave Moses and the Israelites victory over Bashan. Moses listed their victories over Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, among the many blessings and protections of God (Deuteronomy 29:7). The land east of the Jordan taken from Sihon, king of the Amorites, was given to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (verse 8).

Sihon, king of the Amorites, was a mighty king, and his army was strong and terrible. It is likely that the Israelites were, humanly speaking, not strong enough to defeat Sihon's forces. The Israelites won because the Lord was with them. Their victory over

Sihon is referenced again in the book of Joshua, when Rahab of Jericho tells the spies that her people had heard of the Israelites' victory over Sihon and were therefore afraid to come against them in battle. Rahab says, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us. . . . For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea . . . and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath" (Joshua 2:9-11).

Israel's miraculous victory over Sihon and the Amorites is heralded in the Psalms as well. Psalm 135:10-12 says, "He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—Sihon king of the Amorites . . .—and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel." Psalm 136:17-19 gives praise "to him who struck down great kings . . . and killed mighty kings—. . . Sihon king of the Amorites. His love endures forever."

No king, no army, no political system was enough to destroy God's people because God was their Protector, and the same is true for those who trust in Him today. It is His power that protects, saves, and keeps us (Romans 1:16). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38-39). Let Sihon do his worst; God's people will overcome.