

Numbers 21

Verses 1 – 3

When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. ² So Israel made a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will indeed hand over this people to me, then I will utterly destroy their cities.” ³ The Lord heard the voice of Israel and turned over the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. And the place was named Hormah.

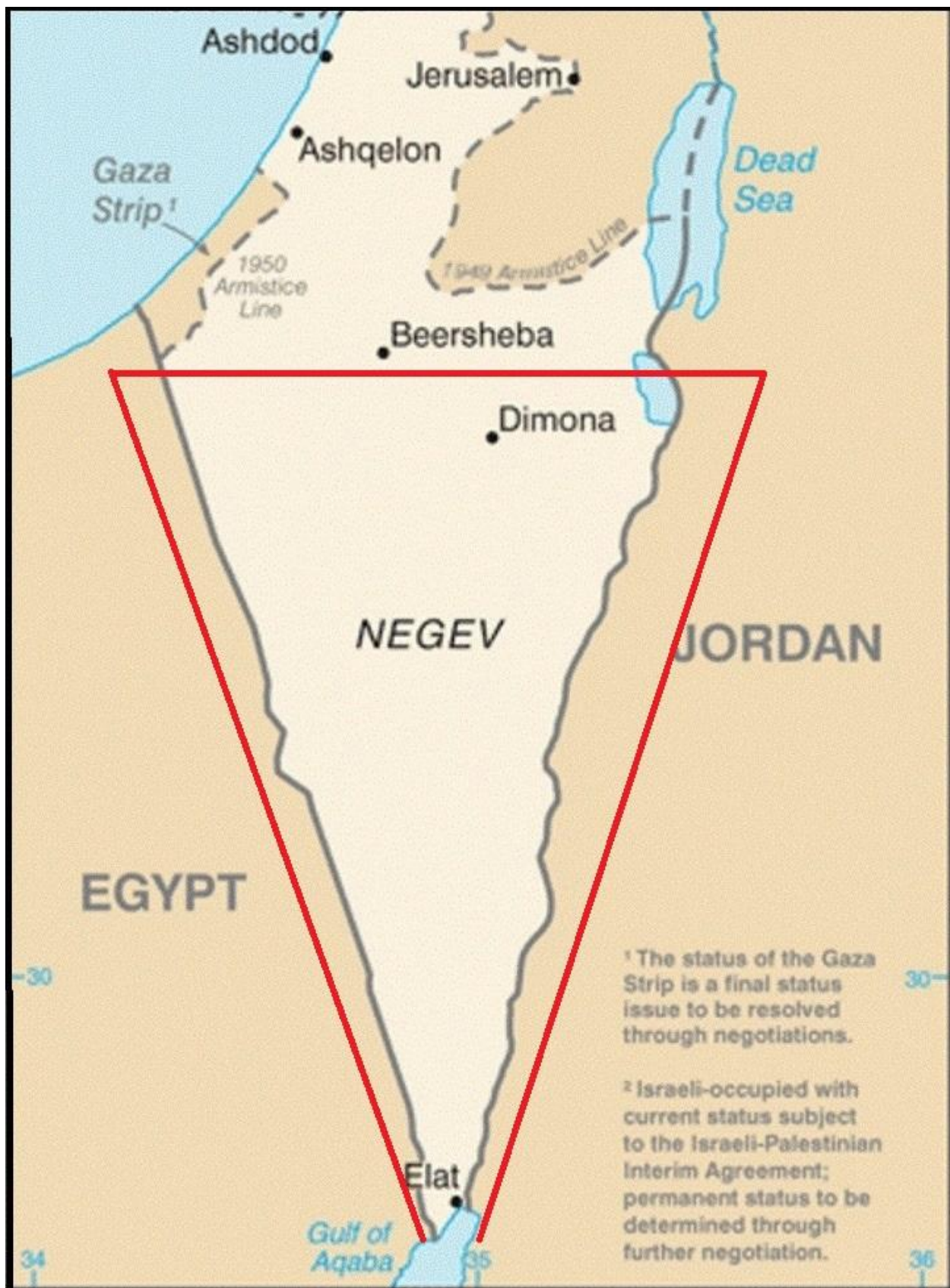
When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them captive.

See Pics 2105



Arad was in the northern part of the Negev. The Negev covered the area outline in red below.

See Pic 2110



² So Israel made a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will indeed hand over this people to me, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

The City of Tel Arad may have been a small border town but it is quite possible they had help from other cities. The other cities are not named but it does say cities.

³ The Lord heard the voice of Israel and turned over the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. And the place was named Hormah.

Hormah means placing under a ban, or devoting to utter destruction.

Verses 4 – 9

⁴ Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. ⁵ So the people spoke against God and Moses: “Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we are disgusted with this miserable food.” ⁶ Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷ So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and against you; intercede with the Lord, that He will remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. ⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and put it on a flag *pole*; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, and looks at it, will live.” ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on the flag *pole*; and it came about, that if a serpent bit someone, and he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

⁴ Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey

In chapter 20 Israel had left Mount Hor and headed south which would take them to the Red Sea. However, Moses wanted to include this attack from the King of Arad in the North before he continued on with the narrative.

Now that that event has been told, Moses picks back up with their journey to the south in their effort to avoid Moab.

⁵ So the people spoke against God and Moses: “Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we are disgusted with this miserable food.”

1. What did they mean when they said there wasn't any food?

There wasn't the variety of food that they may have desired but they were not starving. The comment about this miserable food was an insult to God who was still providing manna on a daily basis.

2. Was it true that there was no water?

Sometimes they went without water for a period of time, but we do not have any evidence that anyone ever died from the lack of water.

⁶ Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

God had disciplined their parents for the same kind of grumbling and this generation should have learned from the mistakes of their parents. Besides, it was their parents who were responsible for their current situation because they refused to enter Canaan.

We don't know how many died but it definitely got their attention.

⁷ So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and against you; intercede with the Lord, that He will remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people.

This tragedy resulted in some good because they confessed their sin and apologized to the Lord and Moses. They also requested that Moses intercede on their behalf.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and put it on a flag *pole*; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, and looks at it, will live.”

God didn't take the serpents away, but he did provide a way to be healed.

The brass serpent was taken to Canaan and preserved until the time of Hezekiah. He had it broken in pieces because the people were burning incense to it.

See 2 Kings 18:4

⁴ He removed the high places and smashed the memorial stones to pieces, and cut down the Asherah. He also crushed to pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel had been burning incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.

Jesus mentioned the bronze serpent when he was talking with Nicodemus.

See John 3:14-15

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes will have eternal life in Him.

The lifting up of the serpent foretold the manner of Jesus' death on Calvary.

One serpent on a staff or two serpents on a pole is the symbol of the AMA (American Medical Association).

See pic 2115

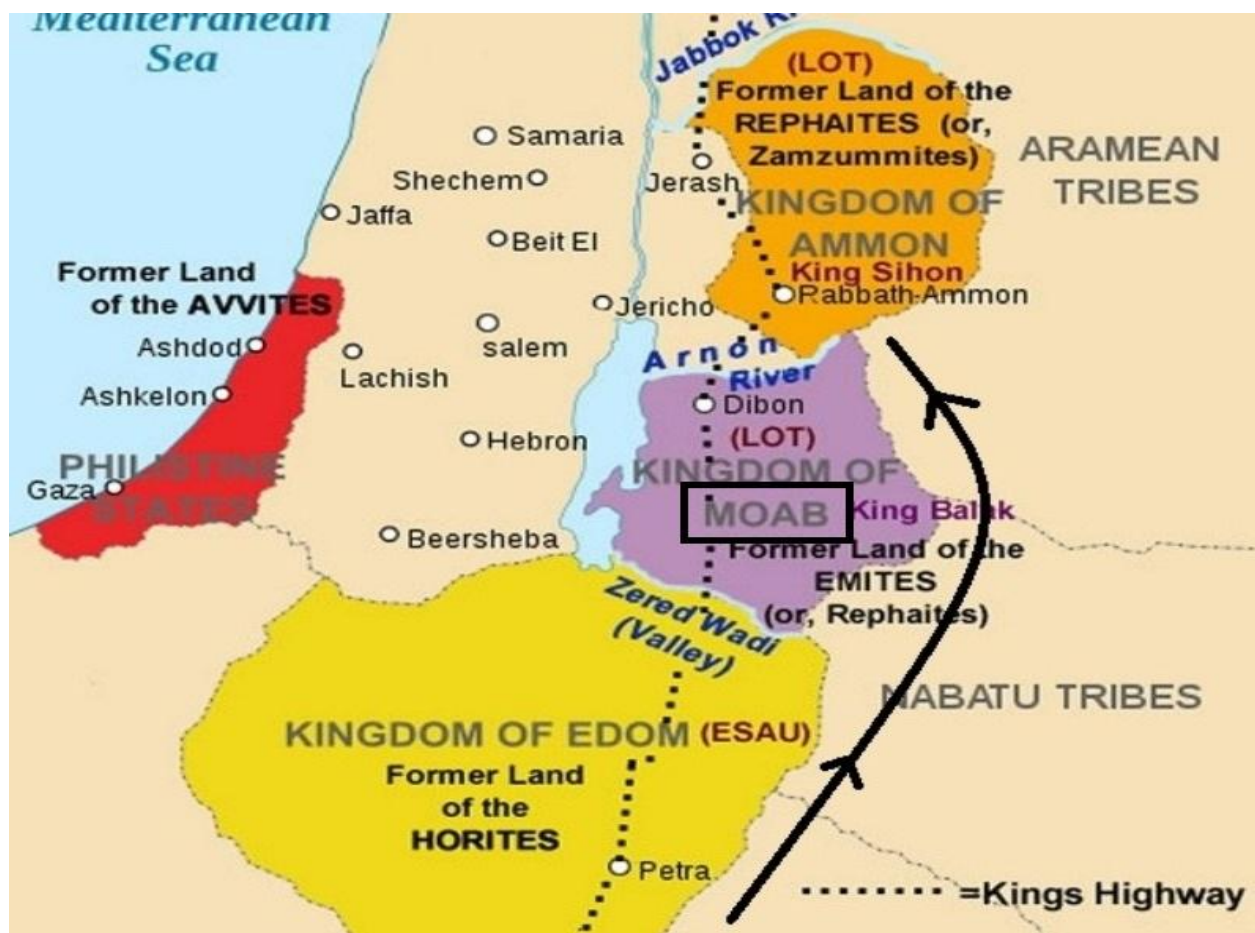


Verses 10 – 15

¹⁰ Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth. ¹¹ Then they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east. ¹² From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered. ¹³ From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that comes out of the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. ¹⁴ For that reason it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord, “Waheb in Suphah, and the wadis of the Arnon, ¹⁵ And the slope of the wadis that extends to the site of Ar, and leans to the border of Moab.”

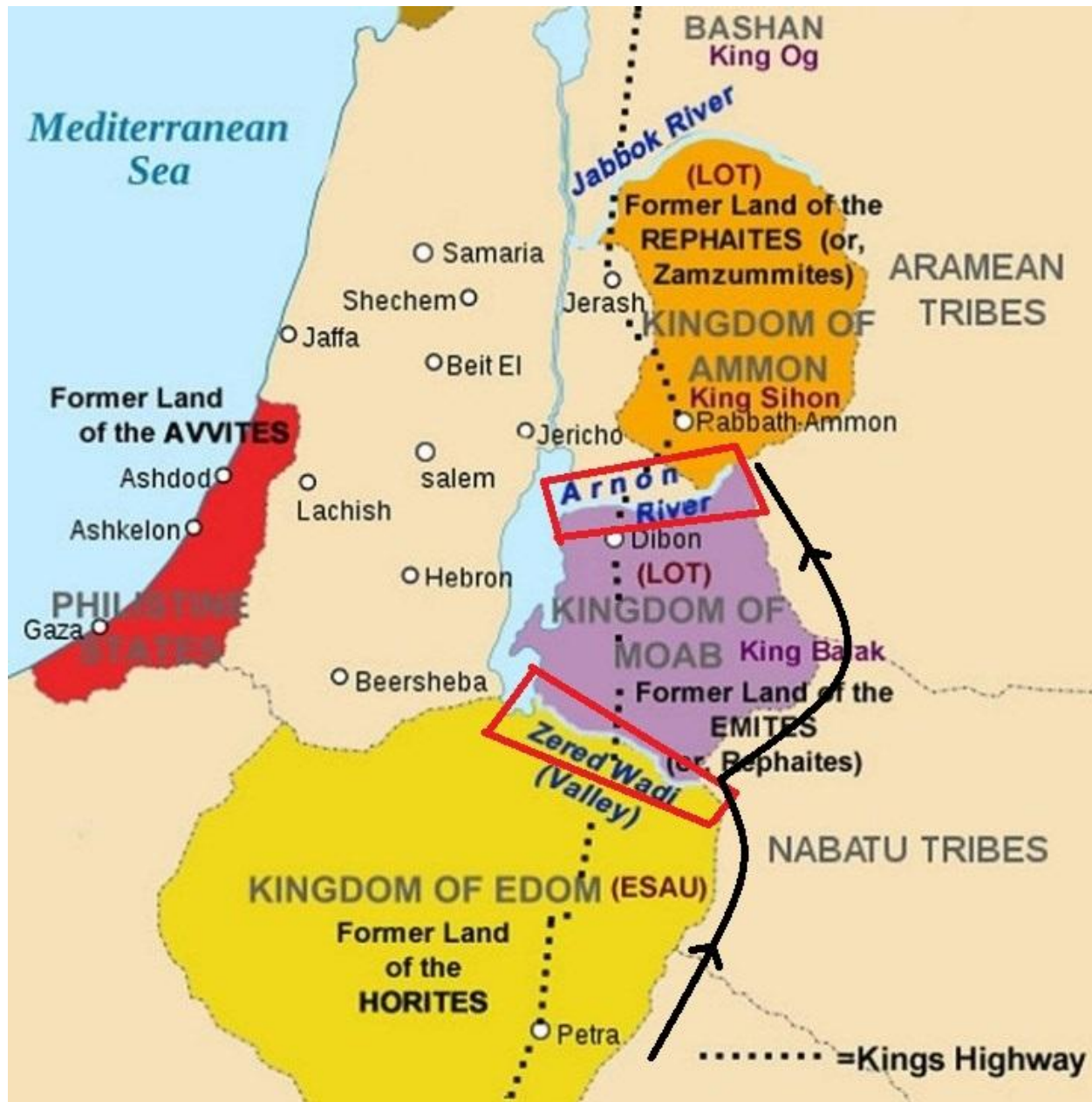
¹⁰ Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth. ¹¹ Then they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east.

See Map 2120



¹² From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered. ¹³ From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon.

See Map 2121



¹⁴ For that reason it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord.....

The only thing we know about this book is what is quoted here.

Verses 16 – 20

¹⁶ From there *they continued* to Beer, that is the well where the Lord said to Moses, “Assemble the people, that I may give them water.”

¹⁷ Then Israel sang this song:

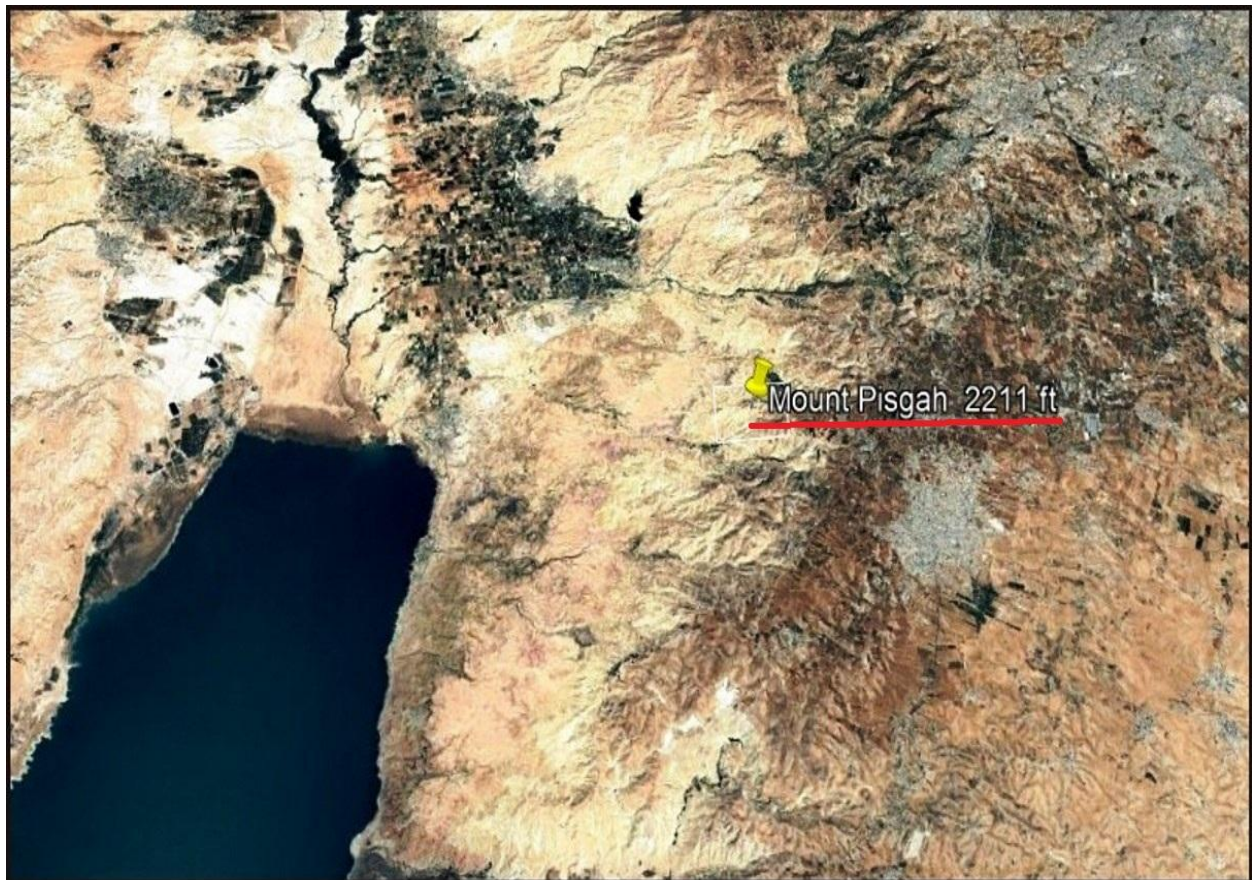
“Spring up, O well! Sing to it!

¹⁸ The well, which the leaders dug,
Which the nobles of the people hollowed out,
With the scepter *and* with their staffs.”

And from the wilderness *they continued* to Mattanah, ¹⁹ and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, ²⁰ and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah, which overlooks the desert.

From there *they continued* to Beer, Mattanah, Nahaliel, Bamoth and then to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah

See Map 2125 Mount Pisgah



¹⁷ Then Israel sang this song:

“Spring up, O well! Sing to it!

**¹⁸ The well, which the leaders dug,
Which the nobles of the people hollowed out,
With the scepter *and* with their staffs.”**

This song was sung for centuries in the Temple in Jerusalem on every third Sabbath. Instead of speaking to or striking a rock to bring forth water God must have told them to dig a well.

Verses 21 – 26

²¹ Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying, ²² “Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the king’s road until we have passed through your border.” ²³ But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. Instead, Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. ²⁴ Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer. ²⁵ Israel took all these cities, and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all her villages. ²⁶ For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon.

²¹ Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying

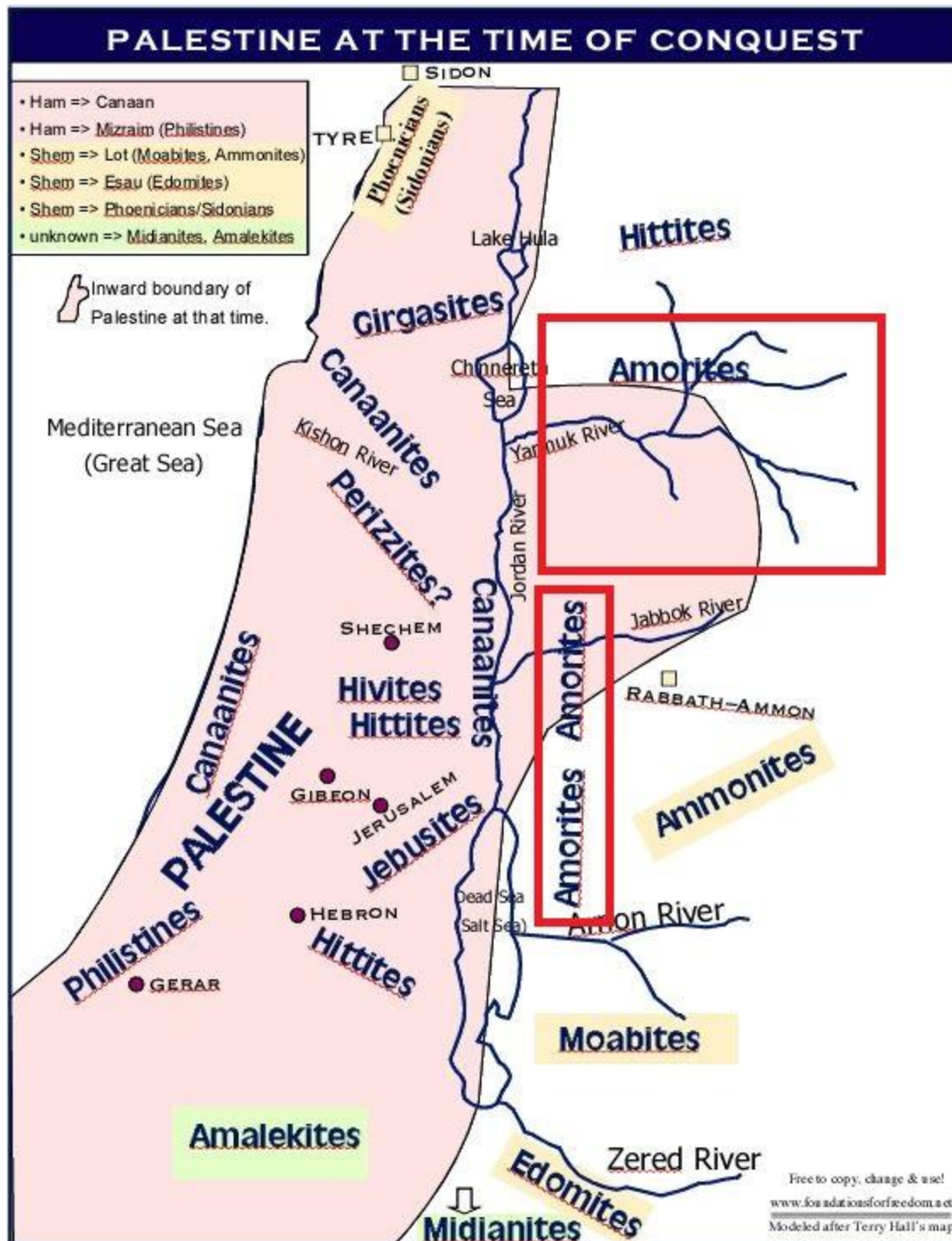
Canaan was the fourth and youngest son of Ham and he became the father of many tribes.

See Genesis 10:15-19

¹⁵ Canaan fathered Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth, ¹⁶ the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Gergashite, ¹⁷ the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, ¹⁸ the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.

The Amorites lived on the east side of the Jordan River.

See Map 2130



The conquest of Canaan will begin by defeating the Amorites in the south by the Dead Sea and then moving north. This was on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

²³ But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. Instead, Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

See Map 2135



They fought near the city of Jahaz.

²⁴ Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon was Jazer.

Where did slaves wondering in the wilderness for 40 years get swords? It is likely that there were arms dealers in the surrounding nations that were willing to sell swords and other weapons of war to the Israelites during the 40 years in the wilderness.

They took the land from the Arnon to the Jabbok

See Map 2140



²⁵ Israel took all these cities, and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all her villages. ²⁶ For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites.

The King of Sihon lived in Heshbon, very close to where the battle took place in Jahaz.

See Map 2145



Verses 27 – 30

²⁷ For that reason those who use proverbs say,

“Come to Heshbon! Let it be built!
So let the city of Sihon be established.

²⁸ For a fire spread from Heshbon,
A flame from the town of Sihon;
It devoured Ar of Moab,
The dominant heights of the Arnon.

²⁹ Woe to you, Moab!
You are destroyed, people of Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To an Amorite king, Sihon.

³⁰ But we have shot them down *with arrows*,
Heshbon is destroyed as far as Dibon,
Then we have laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba.”

²⁹ Woe to you, Moab!
You are destroyed, people of Chemosh!

Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites. He is the same as Milcom, or Molech. He was worshipped with the sacrifice of children. Later, Solomon will build a shrine to this deity for one of his many wives.

See 1 Kings 11:7-8

⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abhorrent idol of Moab, on the mountain that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abhorrent idol of the sons of Ammon. ⁸ He also did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

³⁰ But we have shot them down *with arrows*,
Heshbon is destroyed as far as Dibon,
Then we have laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba.”

In verse 24 we learned that Israel had swords and here they have Bows and Arrows.

Verses 31 - 32

³¹ So Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. ³² Now Moses sent *men to spy out Jazer*, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there.

Jazer was probably somewhat north of the battle in Jahaz. In any case, the Amorites were spread out throughout this region.

Verse 33 - 35

³³ Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan went out against them with all his people, for battle at Edrei. ³⁴ But the Lord said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to you, and all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon." ³⁵ So they killed him and his sons and all his people, until there was no survivor left; and they took possession of his land.

³³ Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan went out against them with all his people, for battle at Edrei.

See Map 2150 Bashan



King Og was a giant among other men.

See Deut. 3:11

¹¹ (For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron; it is in Rabbah of the sons of Ammon. Its length was nine cubits, and its width four cubits by the usual cubit.)

His bed was 13 ½ feet by 6 feet. Someone snapped this pic on their phone. ☺

See Pic 2155



The battle took place at Edrei

See map 2150 above.

Israel captured 60 cities and a great number of towns. All of the cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars.

See Deut. 3:1 – 7

Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og, king of Bashan, came out with all his people to meet us in battle at Edrei. ² But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have handed him and all his people and his land over to you; and you shall do to him just as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.’ ³ So the LORD our God also handed over to us Og, king of Bashan, with all his people, and we struck them until no survivor was left. ⁴ We captured all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many unwallled towns. ⁶ We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. ⁷ But all the animals and the spoils of the cities we took as our plunder.