

ered River through difficult terrain, the Israelites skirted Moab by taking the desert road around Moab (Deut. 2:8). Finally, Moses led Israel down and across the great gorge of the Arnon and intersected the King's Highway. Amorite kings controlled much of the Transjordan Plateau stretching beyond them to the north. The days of battle had come.

Conquest of the Transjordan

Moses sent messengers to Sihon, king of Heshbon, entreating the Amorites to allow Israel safe passage, a request that Sihon refused. Heshbon was an important city on the King's Highway and a key to controlling the lush grazing lands of the mishor or "tableland" of Moab. Sihon refused the request and gathered his force for attack. At Jahaz, the tribes defeated Sihon's army and subsequently conquered Amorite villages scattered between the Arnon and southern Gilead (Deut. 2:24-37; Num. 21:21-32). Next, Israel attacked Og, king of Bashan, seizing the towns and villages of his kingdom (Num. 21:33-35; Deut. 3:1-11). These victories brought much of the territory from the Arnon to Mount Hermon in the north under Israel's control, land eventually divided among the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.

The victorious Israelites made camp in the Plains of Moab at Shittim, opposite Jericho beyond the Jordan. Their successes brought fear to other kings in the region. Balak, king of Moab, sought the service of Baalam, son of Beor, to place a curse on Israel in an effort to forestall further victories (Num. 22-24). Aramaic texts found at Tell Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley included prophecies of this same Baalam, whose fame as a seer continued for generations. God caused Baalam to bless Israel, although the people of Israel joined themselves to the pagan god Baal of Peor, resulting in twenty-four thousand deaths (Num. 25).

THE JOURNEY FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB

NUM. 20-21; 33:37-49, DEUT. 1-2; JUDG. 11:12-28

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ← Possible routes from Kadesh-barnea to the Plains of Moab
- ↖ Possible alternate route I
- ↗ Possible alternate route II
- ↔ Israelite battle missions
- ↔ Sihon attacks
- ↔ Og attacks
- ⚔ Battle
- King's Highway
- ⋯ Other routes

