

~HESHBON (256) **(Hesh'bon)**

- A place identified with modern Hisban, a ruined city situated about 20 kilometers (12 miles) Southwest of Rabbah or `Amman. It lies nearly midway between the Arnon and the Jabbok.
- Sihon the king of the Amorites, who dwelt in **Heshbon**, ruling from Aroer, which was on the bank of the torrent valley of Arnon, and the middle of the torrent valley, and half of Gilead as far as Jabbok the torrent valley, the boundary of the sons of Ammon. (**Joshua 12:2**)
- As yet no archaeological remains dating to the Canaanite period have been found there. A large ruined reservoir is located a short distance to the East of **Heshbon**, and about 180 meters (600 feet) below the city there is a fountain that has formed a succession of pools.
- Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the pools in **Heshbon**, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which is looking out toward Damascus. (**Song of Solomon 7:4**)

See Also BATH-RABBIM

- The Amorite king Sihon captured **Heshbon** from the Moabites and made it his royal residence. The Moabite defeat even provided the basis for a taunting proverbial saying, either of Amorite or Israelite origin.
- In the event this saying stemmed from the Amorites, it mocked the Moabites and memorialized King Sihon's victory. But, if originating with the Israelites, it signified that just as Sihon had wrested **Heshbon** from the Moabites, so Israel would take this and other cities from the Amorites.
- The taunt would then be that the victory of Sihon paved the way for the Israelites to take possession of land to which they would otherwise not have been entitled.
- For **Heshbon** was the city of Sihon. He was the king of the

Amorites, and it was he who fought with the king of Moab formerly and went taking all his land out of his hand as far as the Arnon. (**Numbers 21:26**)

- That is why the sayers of mock verses would say; Come to **Heshbon**. Let the city of Sihon be built and be proved firmly set up. (**Numbers 21:27**)
- For a fire has come out of **Heshbon**, a flame from the town of Sihon. It has consumed Ar of Moab, the owners of the high places of the Arnon. (**Numbers 21:28**)
- Woe to you, Moab! You will certainly perish, O people of Chemosh! He will certainly give his sons as escaped ones and his daughters in the captivity to the king of the Amorites, Sihon. (**Numbers 21:29**)
- So let us shoot at them. **Heshbon** will certainly perish up to Dibon; And the women up to Nophah, the men up to Medeba. (**Numbers 21:30**)
- Yehowah then said to me; Do not molest Moab or engage in war with them, because I shall not give you any of his land as a holding, for to the sons of Lot I have given Ar as a holding. (**Deuteronomy 2:9**)
- When King Sihon refused to allow the Israelites under Moses to pass peacefully through his land and instead prepared to battle against them, Yehowah gave his people the victory over Sihon. Amorite cities, undoubtedly including **Heshbon**, were devoted to destruction.
- Then I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon the king of **Heshbon** with words of peace, saying; (**Deuteronomy 2:26**)
- Let me pass through your land. Only on the road I shall walk. I shall not turn to the right or to the left. (**Deuteronomy 2:27**)
- What food you will sell me for money, I must eat, and what water you will give me for money, I must drink. Only let me pass through on my feet. (**Deuteronomy 2:28**)
- Just the same as the sons of Esau dwelling in Seir and the Moabites dwelling in Ar did to me, until I shall pass over the

Jordan into the land that Yehowah our God is giving to us.
([Deuteronomy 2:29](#))

- And Sihon the king of **Heshbon** did not let us pass through him, because Yehowah your God had let his spirit become obstinate and his heart become hard, in order to give him into your hand just as at this day. ([Deuteronomy 2:30](#))
- At this Yehowah said to me; See, I have started to abandon Sihon and his land to you. Start to take possession of his land. ([Deuteronomy 2:31](#))
- When Sihon came on out, he and all his people, to meet us in battle at Jahaz. ([Deuteronomy 2:32](#))
- Then Yehowah our God abandoned him to us, so that we defeated him and his sons and all his people. ([Deuteronomy 2:33](#))
- And we went capturing all his cities at that particular time and devoting every city to destruction, men and women and little children. We left no survivor. ([Deuteronomy 2:34](#))
- Only the domestic animals did we take as plunder for ourselves, together with the spoil of the cities that we had captured. ([Deuteronomy 2:35](#))
- From Aroer, which is by the bank of the torrent valley of Arnon, and the city that is in the torrent valley, as far as Gilead, there proved to be no town that was too high up for us. Yehowah our God abandoned them all to us. ([Deuteronomy 2:36](#))
- However, we devoted them to destruction, just as we had done to Sihon the king of **Heshbon**, in devoting every city to destruction, men, women and little children. ([Deuteronomy 3:6](#))
- Eventually you came to this place, and Sihon the king of **Heshbon** and Og the king of Bashan proceeded to come out to meet us in battle, but we defeated them. ([Deuteronomy 29:7](#))
- After that Israel sent messengers to Sihon the king of the Amorites, the king of **Heshbon**, and Israel said to him; Let us pass, please, through your land to my own place. ([Judges 11:19](#))

- And Sihon did not feel sure about Israel's crossing through his territory, and Sihon went gathering all his people together and camping in Jahaz and fighting against Israel. (**Judges 11:20**)
- At this Yehowah the God of Israel gave Sihon and all his people into Israel's hand, so that they struck them and Israel took possession of all the land of the Amorites inhabiting that land. (**Judges 11:21**)
- Thus they took possession of all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok and from the wilderness as far as the Jordan. (**Judges 11:22**)
- Afterward the Reubenites rebuilt **Heshbon**.
- And the sons of Reuben built **Heshbon** and Elealeh and Kiriathaim. (**Numbers 32:37**)
- It being included among the cities that Moses gave to them.
- Then Moses made a gift to the tribe of the sons of Reuben by their families. (**Joshua 13:15**)
- And the territory came to be theirs from Aroer, which is on the bank of the torrent valley of Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the torrent valley, and all the tableland by Medeba. (**Joshua 13:16**)
- **Heshbon** and all its towns that are on the tableland, Dibon and Bamoth-baal and Beth-baal-meon. (**Joshua 13:17**)
- As a border city between Reuben and Gad, **Heshbon** later became a part of Gad's territory and is named as one of the four Gadite cities assigned to the Levites.
- And out of the tribe of Gad, the city of refuge for the manslayer, namely, Ramoth in Gilead, and its pasture ground, and Mahanaim and its pasture ground. (**Joshua 21:38**)
- **Heshbon** and its pasture ground, Jazer and its pasture ground, all the cities being four. (**Joshua 21:39**)
- To the sons of Merari that were left over they gave from the tribe of Zebulun Rimmono with its pasture grounds, Tabor with its

pasture grounds. (**1 Chronicles 6:77**)

- And from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture grounds and Mahanaim with its pasture grounds. (**1 Chronicles 6:80**)
- And **Heshbon** with its pasture grounds and Jazer with its pasture grounds. (**1 Chronicles 6:81**)
- At a later period **Heshbon** evidently came under Moabite control, as is indicated by the fact that both Isaiah and Jeremiah mention it in their pronouncements of doom against Moab.
- And **Heshbon** and Elealeh cry out. As far as Yahaz their voice has been heard. That is why the armed men of Moab themselves keep shouting. His very soul has quivered within him. (**Isaiah 15:4**)
- Therefore Moab will howl for Moab, even all of it will howl. For the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth the stricken ones indeed will moan. (**Isaiah 16:7**)
- Because the terraces themselves of **Heshbon** have withered. The vine of Sibmah, the owners of the nations themselves have smitten down its bright-red branches. As far as Jazer they had reached, they had wandered about in the wilderness. Its own shoots had been left to luxuriate for themselves, they had gone over to the sea. (**Isaiah 16:8**)
- That is why I shall weep with the weeping of Jazer over the vine of Sibmah. With my tears I shall drench you, O **Heshbon** and Elealeh, because shouting even over your summer and over your harvest has fallen down. (**Isaiah 16:9**)
- No more is there any praise of Moab. In **Heshbon** they have thought out against her a calamity; Come, men, and let us cut her off from being a nation. You, too, O Madmen, should keep silent. After you there walks a sword. (**Jeremiah 48:2**)
- From the cry in **Heshbon** clear to Elealeh, clear to Jahaz they have given forth their voice, from Zoar clear to Horonaim, to Eglath-shelishiyah, for even the waters of Nimrim themselves will become mere desolations. (**Jeremiah 48:34**)

- In the shadow of **Heshbon** those fleeing have stood still without power. For a very fire will certainly go forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and it will devour the temples of Moab and the crown of the head of the sons of uproar. (**Jeremiah 48:45**)
- Jeremiah also refers to this city in a pronouncement against Ammon.
- For the sons of Ammon this is what Yehowah has said; Are there no sons that Israel has, or is there no inheritor that he has? Why is it that Malcam has taken possession of Gad, and his own people have taken up dwelling in Israel's very cities? (**Jeremiah 49:1**)
- Howl, O **Heshbon**, for Ai has been despoiled! Cry out, O dependent towns of Rabbah. Gird sackcloth on yourselves. Wail, and rove about among the stone pens, for Malcam himself will go even into exile, his priests and his princes, all together. (**Jeremiah 49:3**)
- Some commentators understand this to indicate that **Heshbon** had by then come into Ammonite hands. Others suggest that this may mean either that **Heshbon** of Moab would share the same fate as Ai or that a different **Heshbon** in the territory of Ammon is intended.
- According to the Jewish historian Josephus, **Heshbon** was in the possession of the Jews in the time of Alexander Jannaeus, **103-76 B.C.E.** Later, Herod the Great had jurisdiction over the city. [**Jewish Antiquities, XIII, 395-397, xv, 4, XV, 294, viii, 5**]