

Numbers 21:21–35

²¹ and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon was fortified. ²⁵ So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its 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 from his hand as far as the Arnon. ²⁷ Therefore those who speak in proverbs say: “Come to Heshbon, let it be built;

Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

²⁸ “For fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It consumed Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of the Arnon.

²⁹ Woe to you, Moab!
You have perished, O people of Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To Sihon king of the Amorites.

³⁰ “But we have shot at them;
Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon.
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which reaches to Medeba.”

³¹ Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. ³² Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who were there.

³³ And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ³⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.” ³⁵ So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.

Promises Kept in Power and Mercy

Introduction: an explanation for grace... God is accomplishing His plan and keeping His promises.

Main idea: God glorifies His faithfulness, power, and mercy as He keeps His saving promises.

1. Faithfulness to do what He has said

1. The forty years are up. Now God restrains their sin to whatever extent is necessary for accomplishing His redemptive plan.
2. Giving His people to dwell in the land and possess it (v25, 31, 35).
3. God is faithful to all of His promises. Don't just relish the promises. In a world where no one else can be absolutely faithful, relish Him and His faithfulness.

2. Power to accomplish it

1. Amorite, Heshbonian, Sihonian, military prowess was the stuff of poetic legend, but became the prelude to Israelite victory in the “latest” edition (v26–30).
2. Og was the last of the giants, but Israel completely wiped him out.

3. God is powerful to do all His will. Yes, trust Him and do not fret. But also do not forget to praise His power and bask in His greatness as He glorifies His power before your eyes.
3. **Mercy not just by it but in the midst of it**
 1. Subtle mercy: “do not fear him”
 2. Strange (?) mercy: “until there was no survivor left him” (cf. v2–3, Deu 20:18)
 3. God is not just doing merciful things for you. He is being merciful to you. Take that mercy to heart and enjoy the foundational aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. And define mercy to yourself not the way that your flesh would, but the way that God does (including the mercy of ruthlessness in sanctification).

Conclusion: There are so many right responses to God’s saving work, and to His great and saving works in our lives. But let us bear in mind that He is especially displaying Himself in that work. Let us make our first response to Him Himself with hearts of worship that produce lives of worship!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers 21 versus 21-35. These are God's words. Then Israel sent Messengers to sihan king of the amorites. Saying, let me pass through your land. We will not turn our side into Fields or Vineyards. We will not drink water from Wells. We will go by the King's Highway. Until we have passed through your territory.

But See, Han would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So, sihan gathered all his people together, And went out against Israel in the wilderness. And he came to yahazh and fought against Israel. Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land.

From the Arna to the jabak as far as the people of Ammon. For the border of the people of Ammon was fortified, So Israel took all these cities and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the amorites in hashten, And in all its Villages. For heshman was the city of seon, King of the amorites.

Had fought against the former king of Moab and taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arden. Therefore those who speak in. Proverbs say, come to heshman, let it be built. Let the city of sihan be repaired for fire, went out from heshman a flame, from the city of seahon.

It consumed. Awe of Moab, the Lords of the heights, of the Arnon woe to you. Moab you have perished o, people of comeas. He has given his sons as fugitives and his daughters into captivity to see Han King the amorites. But we have shot at them hespin, has perished as far as Dahan then we laid waste as far as nofa which reaches to medaba.

Sorry to bond. Thus Israel dwelt. In the land of the amorites. Then Moses sent to spy out jazer. And they took its villagers and drove out the amorites who were there. And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So all King of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people to battle at edray.

Then he always said to Moses. Do not fear Him. For, I have delivered him into your hand with all his people and his land. And you shall do to him as you did to see Han King of the amorites who dwell to Ashman. So, they defeated him. His. And all his people.

Until there was no Survivor left him. And they took possession. Of his land. Amen. Thus ends this reading of God. Inspired. And And Aaron twerked. Uh, if you studied Uh or heard preached last week's portion. Uh, you remember that they made nine stops. Without having to be. Punished by the Lord for.

Grumbling or complaining, nine stops without anyone. Having to be executed or plagued having to go out for rebelling against Moses and Aaron Of course, Aaron was dead by then for rebelling against those whom the Lord had set over them. And it was marvelous. And the only answer for how that could have happened is Grace, Because the generations that had grumbled and then Generations, that had rebelled Those people had the word of God had seen, the mighty works of God, they were being led by God into the, in the wilderness.

They had his promises, they had his They had all the same advantages and so what makes the difference between the one generation and the other generation? It's the grace of God? And now, we're reminded. Or were given an explanation for God being gracious. He's gracious because he has planned to, and he's gracious because he has promised to be He's gracious.

Because he wants to be. But not only does, God has God planned to be gracious. He has promised to be gracious, and there are some Clues now in the account that's before us, That this is. Uh, the what is underlying this passage is the promise of God and his faithfulness to that promise.

And that's especially what we are to see about the history of God's work with his people. When we look at the history, or when we read, or hear about the history of God's work and among his people, the thing that we're supposed to see, Well. It's not a thing, is it?

Like we often say it's a what question with a who answer. It's a thing that's a who isn't it? Or a whom since we are seeing him as and it's an object. We are to see God himself. Now in God's Providence, one of you very helpfully, chose a couple of Psalm selections about See, Han King of the amorites, and OG King of the bashanites, and we see by the holy spirit's own use of this passage.

Don't we? What are we supposed to see for his steadfast love indoors. We are to see by the work of our God. The character. Of our God. And there are three three aspects of his character. Three attributes of God. To use. Um, The ordinary technical theological language. There are three aspects of our God's character that are especially on display In this passage.

First, his faithfulness. His faithfulness to keep his word, his faithfulness to keep his promises. Second, his power. His power set over against those things. And those people that men ordinarily think are powerful His power to accomplish his promises. So it's his faithfulness to do, what he has promised his power to accomplish his promises, but also His Mercy in the midst of it.

That even as this faithful God, whose decision and word, determine what's going to happen? Acts in his Almighty power, overcoming all obstacles to it happening. He's doing it in the context of the lives of people whom he loves. And he's not just bringing about the end result. But he is ministering to them in his Mercy.

He is treating them out of compassion. And, And so his Mercy not just by what he does, it certainly is merciful to save them. But even in the midst, how he deals with them? As he's bringing it about. So those are the three things for us to see about our, our God here.

There's probably more. But those are the three that we are hoping by his help to consider first, his faithfulness, to do. What he has said. He said that. Uh, they would wonder. For 40 years in the wilderness and the 40 years are up. It's like Daniel. As we were thinking about Thursday evening, checking his copy of Jeremiah, which was already part of the Bible for him, you know, just as Paul says in Corinthians that Those who are prophets will as part of their office in in the apostolic age of the church, their job was part of their job was to recognize that Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Don't ever listen to anyone who says the Canon of scripture at any time was being determined by men, Daniel as a prophet, one of the things that he did was recognize that Jeremiah was scripture. Jeremiah his contemporary and so he looked up and oh it says 70 years. This is the year.

And so Daniel prays Like we heard in Daniel chapter 9. Well, there's something like that here too, isn't it? The 40 years are up, it's time for the land of the amorites to be given over to Israel. Because it's not just been the 40, is it? It's been also the 400.

When God told Abraham that he would have this land, his descendants would have this land, but not yet because the sin of the amorites was not yet complete Now, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants didn't have to read the ancient near Eastern times. To figure out whether the amorites had sinned enough that their sin was complete because God had given them a time.

And God is Faithfully, keeping his promises. And for the first time since they come since they come out of Egypt we have this language of them dwelling in the land, we have this language of them, possessing, the land God had given them promises. They would be numerous they're numerous and the best of all their promises, I will be your God.

Will be my people, but it'll also promise them the land. And now he is giving them the land. We see that highlighted and in three places in the passage in verse 25. So Israel took all these cities and Israel dwelt in the cities of the amorites. Verse 31. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the amorites and then verse 35.

They defeated him. Until there was no Survivor left and they took possession. Of his land. God is faithful. To all his promises. And you and I, whatever he says we should trust him. We should be upheld uh by those promises. We should relish them and and enjoy them. Recently, I was looking for a file in the depths of my computer and I discovered Um, The nine copies of the order of service for our wedding.

It produced a master copy and then one for each participant and And in there, Were written promises. Uh, that my wife and I made to each other. Uh, a little over 26 years. Ago now. And, Those promises were precious because of who had made them because they're being kept because of the fruit that has been come from them.

How much more? How much more the promises of your God? Many of, which have been kept? All of which are being kept? And who is who is he, who has made them? And what is the fruit that he is bringing by, by keeping them? They should be precious to us.

But even above, And Beyond. Relishing his promises believing his promises being sure of what he says. All of this promise, keeping announces to us that our God is faithful. This belongs to

his character. You and I live in a world where no one is perfectly faithful. Even those who are the most truthful and the most reliable, they are still present prevented by things like being finite From being able to do all the good that they will to you.

Never mind the fact that every one of us is sinful. You have a faithful God. Do not just relish his promises and depend upon his promises. Do that, but do not only do that. Relish him. In his faithfulness and that part of his character as you come to him and know him as you worship, Him and interact with him.

And enjoy him. Well, not only does he declare to us his faithfulness in this passage he declares to us, his

Mighty Kings, he overthrew. For his steadfast love endures sihan, king of amorites and OG King of Bashan. Uh, he picks two doozies to start with. Uh, sihan was The subject or the, the topic, the object of the great poetry of the day? You know, on the on the ancient near Eastern top 40, There were many, many weeks that at the top of the charts was the song come to heshman.

And let it be built. Let the city of seahon be repaired. And this had replaced an earlier version of the song. Which included and maybe didn't begin, but Included fire went out from heshman a flame from the city of seahon, it consumed aura of Moab. And so sihan, who, whose capital city was heshbin among the amorites, he had just plastered the moabites.

So, so that they sang songs about how much greater the amorites were, how much greater hash been and See Han, uh, were than Moab and their false god Hemet. And And there was this great, the great big song. Well, You got to be careful. Writing and singing songs about your great victories.

Because someone's stronger is going to come along. And they're going to plaster, you And they might even take your song and put it in their song. And change it into the Well, poor dilapidated hespin, someone better, come and repair that place. And so you have the Israelite verse added in.

In verse 30, but we have shot at them has been has perished as far as De Bond. Then we laid waste as far as nofa, which reaches to medaba. Now, the greatness of seahon and As emphasized for us here, there's more about it in Deuteronomy chapter 3, where we actually get more about the interaction between God and Israel.

God and Moses. As they were destroying the amorites, it sounds a lot like when they came to eat them. And at that time, Uh at that time Moses and Aaron had just been told that they were not going to enter and they made a beeline and we we remember that.

But the language at the beginning Of verses 21 and 22 is is very similar. They make the same offer To see Han King of the amorites. But this time, because he was going to say no, so that they could destroy him because they were going to take his land.

So first, they offered to take nothing. Because God was giving them everything and will come to that more when we get to Deuteronomy, but you see the great power of God and wiping out sihan. Now, we really want to borrow from Deuteronomy when we get into verses 33-35. Because Goliath gets all the Press due to children's story Bibles.

But Goliath was a tiny little, dude. Next to OG king of Bashan. Goliath has only six cubits. That's nine feet, you know? It would be like an NBA record. Congratulations for him nine and a

half feet. Um, you know, Robert Wadlow the the guy that's actually in the Guinness book, the eight foot 11.1 inches.

Or whatever. I don't know how you get someone that tall to the Precision of a tenth of an inch whatever. So, you know, Goliath has What nine inches or so on Robert Wadlow? All King of Bashan. Has four feet. On Goliath. He's 13 and a half feet tall. In fact, at a time when iron was precious, and we're going to get to this in Deuteronomy, But OG King of Bashan.

Famous in our house. For being the tallest person. If you want to say someone was super tall or something was super tall OG King of Bashan becomes your analogy. For that. In a, in a time when iron was precious, they kept his bed. I mean, that gives you an idea of what the bed had to be made out of to support them.

But his bed was nine, cubits long. In order to be big enough for him. He was 13 and 1/2. Cubits tall. Or 13 and a half feet, tall. Go into Lowe's sometime. Or maybe they have it at Home Depot, we haven't done Home Depot for a long time. As a family, just because I used to work for a research company into.

The moral morality of companies and what they invested in and there's a reason our family calls, it homo Depot But, Go into laws some time. And look at the, the thing where they're measuring for, you know, there's that that goes all the way up the, the steel girder pole and, you know, people bring in wood and so they can by it's, by the checkout.

Just take a look sometime at how far up 13 and a half feet is There was a man that big. And he wasn't like a skinny rail, kind of man, either. Here's the last of the Giants. And yeah, I just wiped him. And all his children. And all his people out.

God is powerful. To do all his will. What would you ever fear? You're gonna fear the Deep. Does the Deep State intimidate? You there are a lot of people who are super intimidated by the Deep. Lot of people who in order not to be intimidated by the Deep State instead of believing in the Lord who rules and overrules, all things, they just pretend that it must not exist.

Which if you think Joe Biden was running the country. Maybe you need a mental check. But don't fear it. You who belong to the Living God. Who wipes out seahon King of the amorites and, and OG King of Bashan. You're afraid of China. What are you afraid of? And so, yes, trust trust the power of God and do not fret over the power of God.

But again, remember God doesn't just tell us about his attributes for the difference that his attributes make in our lives. He tells us about his attributes so that we will see how glorious he is and worship him. So you can come to him this evening as you're taking advantage of that closing winding down part of the day, and maybe it's something that you do and you lay your head down and You fight the racing, Thoughts by directing your attention to God and interacting with him.

Um, and you say, oh God, thank you for reminding me today that you are faithful. I love how faithful you are. I can't imagine how faithful you are. Your faithfulness is great. Lord, I love you and your Almighty power. How wonderful is your power? Not just that. Nothing can compare to you because it doesn't make sense to do any comparing.

All powers from you and belongs to you. There's nothing that has any power that you don't have to entirely sustain. How wonderful is your power? Oh God. He declares to us his faithfulness, he declares to us his power. He also declares to us his Mercy. He does this in a way that is subtle.

You always said to Moses, do not fear Him for, I have delivered him into your hand. With all his people in his land, you shall do to him as you did to see Han King of the amorites who dwell to Ashman. Moses didn't need, you know, all of that information.

You just needed orders. Right. That's in a good military operation now, probably. Pastor Brown can tell you about all the things they they do. And morale is important and those kinds of things. But the Lord could just come and told Moses. Go up against him, you're going to win.

But the primary command is actually one that touches Moses's heart. Says, do not fear Him. Do not fear Him. God cared about the fear. That was in his servant's heart. It wasn't just accomplishing his purposes in faithfulness and accomplishing his purposes in power. But it is also demonstrating his Mercy, he cared.

About what his servant was experiencing. Yes, God is faithful and he is Sovereign and these are glories of his but do not miss in those other attributes that he is also merciful to you. He cares about what you are experiencing now. He has filled he has filled his work with good commands that touch your experience of him and your experience of of his life do not fear do not worry Rejoice always give thanks continually He is merciful, that's a subtle Mercy.

It's very easy to just run, right? Past it and miss it. And then there's a strange Mercy. It's one that many people get hung up on Things like, So they defeated him, his sons and all his people until there was no Survivor left him. And they took possession of his land.

He'd be like how could a good God? Have commanded the conquest. Of the land. Well, if you have a problem with the conquest of the land, you're going to have a really big problem in the last day. Because God's goodness is not going to take a break. When he is, casting them into hell and their smoke goes up forever.

And his Saints. Praise Him for it. If we are unable to praise him for it, that just means that we that his work in making us to be his Saints is not yet complete. Because we will one day. In fact. He has given us prayers to pray and songs to sing that conform us to the image of Christ.

Did you not? Did you not all just sing? He drowned Pharaoh and his men. For his steadfast love endures forever.

Kings of Splendor. Then he slew. For his steadfast love endures forever. And it wasn't just in the steadfast love, that is first and foremost to and of and in himself. Whereas God would cease to be God and become an evil monster. If he did not vindicate, his glory, vindicate, his Holiness, vindicate, his Justice by destroying, all that is evil.

And it is not just his Mercy, not only for the sake of his own name, and his own glory. And his own Holiness is not just his Mercy for his people. And for all who have been harmed, That he would deliver them. And that he would repay what has been done to them.

It is also Mercy for restraining their own sin. Isn't this? What we're going to see when we get to. Deuteronomy chapter 20. And he gives them instruction about why they have to wipe everyone. Um, About out. I only put Verse 18 in your outline but we can back up to verse 16 but of the cities of these people which Yahweh gives you as you as an inheritance, you shall let, nothing that breathes, remain alive.

But you shall utterly destroy them. The hittite and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the parasite, and the hivite, and the cheby site, just as Yahweh, your God has commanded, you lest Teach you. To do according to older Abominations. Which they have done for their gods. And you sin against Yahweh, your God.

Now, you are not commanded by God to ruthlessly destroy Americans. You may only do this at God's commandment. But you are commanded by God to be pretty ruthless, aren't you? Are you not commanded to be ruthless with your sin? There are many who who think that it is not very merciful of God.

To allow sin, no quarter in the believer's life. It's not very tolerant, or gentle or gracious. To declare all-out War. And give it no air to breathe or food to eat or water to drink. No, space to live everywhere. You see it to stomp it out, to tear it out from the roots.

Like, some of you had to learn when we were doing the beds and well-meaning ones who needed a little extra instruction needed to learn that. You don't just tear the top off the weed. You got to get in there, get the whole thing out and be ruthless. In a culture and even sometimes in a church culture.

Where we don't see, not just the offense of sin against God. And the offense of sin against, man. But the danger that leaving any of it at all, poses to us. Because our remaining flesh is going to teach us to do, according to all the Abominations that it desires.

Desire. When it conceives as going to give birth to sin and sin. When it full is full grown, it's going to lead to death. It's not. Tyrannical. Hardness. That God says, be ruthless with your sin and Destroy it until none remains. It's in Mercy. And it's in a similar Mercy that he does that year.

Where he tells his people. Be ruthless. With your sin. And there is a application, the the being ruthless with your sin, that was just an illustration. Although, That is an application of God's mercy to you. He's more merciful to you than you are to yourself. So when you are reluctant to be as ruthless as he tells you to be, remember, he's being merciful to you.

There's an application to the church. And how we do. But we are to be. No. Use this word to think of hostility or malice to others. But we are to be ruthless and exact. And unyielding with things like church membership. And church discipline. Isn't that the logic of First Corinthians 5?

That if there's unrepentant sin, not Brothers and sisters who are fighting against sin by grace and but those who refuse to turn And want their sin tolerated and celebrated. Rather than helped and eradicate it. And there the language is leaven. That the church will be leavened then. And for the sake of the spiritual well-being, Of all the precious ones in his church.

You don't keep unrepentant, Sinners in the church. Not one. You get rid of them all. And that's Mercy. That's his love. Just like this is his Mercy here. That they didn't keep. Anyone. Of OG kangar Bashan. In fact, Israel fails Ultimately, don't they? To be as merciful to themselves as God, had commanded them to be.

And those people who did remain in the land, did teach them their Abominations.

We Define Mercy, rightly we see his Mercy. Part of the application is to be grateful for how merciful he's been to us, and to imitate him and want to be as merciful with ourselves. And with others as he is with us. But you probably have guessed by. Now what the further application is Don't just enjoy and respond to and take advantage of his Mercy in your life.

Worship Him. In that attribute of his, that is his steadfast love. That endures forever. Worship him for his faithfulness worship him for his power. Worship Him. For his Mercy, there are so

many right responses. To God's saving work and to his great and saving Works in our lives. But let us bear in mind that he is, especially displaying himself in that work.

And let us make our first response to him himself. With hearts of worship. That produce lives of worship, let's pray. We thank you and praise you. Our God for declaring yourself to us in your word generally. And declaring to us, just now. Your faithfulness and your power and your mercy in this part of your word specifically.

Give us, we pray. To worship you and to love your faithfulness and your power and your mercy to adore you for it. And give us, we pray in light of your word from this morning. To adore you Lord Jesus. As this God, Whose faithfulness and power. And mercy. You have just now declared we ask by the help of your spirit in your very own name.

Amen.