

Question: What exactly is the “Book of the Wars of the Lord” mentioned in *Numbers 21:14*?

Biblical Reference

The phrase appears in Numbers 21:14 (NIV):

“That is why the Book of the Wars of the Lord says: ‘...Waheb in Suphah and the ravines of the Arnon...’”

This is the only place in the Bible where this mysterious book is mentioned. It is cited during the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness as they approached the land of Moab, highlighting a historical moment when God fought on their behalf.

What Was the Book?

The *Book of the Wars of the Lord* is believed to have been an ancient historical record or songbook, possibly written by the Israelites, documenting the battles where God intervened directly

for His people. It may have contained war songs, poetic recounting of divine victories, and testimonies of God’s power and justice during Israel’s conquests.

Though it’s not preserved in the biblical canon, the fact that it’s cited implies that it was well-known and respected among the Israelites at the time. This book, along with others that have not survived, such as:

- The Book of Jasher (2 Samuel 1:18; Joshua 10:13)
- The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 14:19, 14:29)
- The Records of Nathan the Prophet, Gad the Seer, and Samuel the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29)

...shows that the biblical writers often referenced broader written histories as authoritative and trustworthy.

Why Is It Not in the Bible Today?

Some may wonder why God allowed such books to disappear. Theologically, the Bible itself answers this question in principle. The Apostle John writes:

“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.”

(John 20:30, NIV)

And again:

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

(John 21:25, NIV)

In other words, God, in His sovereignty, chose to preserve only what is essential for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training

in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is not a comprehensive record of every divine action, but it contains all that is necessary for salvation and spiritual life.

What's the Relevance Today?

The mention of books like the *Book of the Wars of the Lord* reminds us that God's work in history is vast and expansive far beyond what is recorded. Still, we have been given exactly what we need.

Unfortunately, many today neglect even this preserved Word. Consider this: You may have read millions of words in newspapers, social media posts, textbooks, and novels but have you read the whole Bible even once?

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.”
(1 Timothy 4:13, NIV)

Paul's words to Timothy apply to us all. Studying God's Word is a

spiritual discipline and a divine command. It doesn't require perfection just consistency and hunger for God.

Conclusion

Though the *Book of the Wars of the Lord* no longer exists, its mention reminds us of God's active role in history and His commitment to His people. The Bible remains the divinely preserved, sufficient Word of God pointing us to Christ, who is the fulfillment of all God's promises.

Let us commit ourselves to reading it diligently.

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