

Deuteronomy 20:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

Analysis

And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it—Rejection of peace justifies siege. The Hebrew tsur (צָר, 'bind, besiege, confine') pictures surrounding the city, cutting off supplies until starvation forces surrender. This was protracted, costly warfare—final resort after peace offered and refused.

God Himself practices this principle: **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live** (Ezekiel 33:11). Yet persistent rebellion necessitates judgment. Revelation depicts Christ's final siege: **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him** (Revelation 3:20)—but those refusing entry face ultimate siege: **The wicked shall be turned into hell** (Psalm 9:17). God's patience exhausts only after extended opportunity.

Historical Context

Ancient sieges lasted months or years (Samaria's siege lasted three years, 2 Kings 17:5). Attackers built earthworks, battering rams, and blockades. Defenders endured starvation, disease, and despair. God's requirement to offer peace first meant sieges occurred only against hardened enemies.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's patience (offering peace before siege) both comfort you regarding His mercy and warn you about presuming upon it?
2. What 'sieges' (prolonged spiritual warfare, persistent temptations) must you endure because the enemy refuses surrender?
3. How does Revelation 3:20 (Christ knocking) show His merciful offer before the final siege (judgment)?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	אָם	תְּשִׁלֵּם	עַמְּךָ	וְעַשֵּׂת	הָ	עַמְּךָ
H518	H3808	And if it will make no peace	H7999	H5973	with thee but will make	H6213	H5973
מְלֹתָם	הָ	אֶצְרָפָה	עַלְיָבָן				
war		against thee then thou shalt besiege		H5921			
H4421		H6696					

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