

# Deuteronomy 20:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

## Analysis

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**But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself**—Non-combatants (**women and little ones**) and possessions become shalal ('שָׁלָל, 'plunder, spoil'). This contrasts with Canaanite herem (total destruction, Joshua 6:17-19) where even spoil was forbidden. For distant nations (non-Canaanite), Israel could benefit economically from conquest.

This provision prevented wasteful destruction while removing military capacity. New Testament parallel: spiritual warfare targets demonic powers (**we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers**, Ephesians 6:12), not people. We 'destroy' false ideologies (**casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God**, 2 Corinthians 10:5) while 'plundering' useful elements (Paul quoted pagan poets, Acts 17:28, Titus 1:12).

## Historical Context

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Spoils of war funded Israel's economy and rewarded soldiers (Numbers 31:25-47). By distinguishing Canaanite wars (total herem) from distant wars (spoils permitted), God balanced judgment's necessity with economic pragmatism. Women

and children integrated into Israelite households, often converting to YHWH worship (like Rahab).

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How do you 'plunder' cultural goods (art, philosophy, science) without adopting culture's idolatrous foundations?
2. What does targeting 'powers' (Ephesians 6:12) rather than people teach about loving enemies while opposing evil?
3. In spiritual warfare, what constitutes legitimate 'spoils' (redeemable elements) versus what must be totally destroyed?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהַנְּשָׁיִלְתָּה וְהַבָּהָתָה וְאֲשֶׁר וְכֹל  
H7535 But the women and the little ones and the cattle H3605 H834 H1961  
H802 H2945 H929

כָּל־יְרֵבֶת־זָהָב־לְכָל־  
H3605 even all the spoil H7998 H962 H0  
and all that is in the city

אַכְלָתְךָ אַתְּ שְׁלָל־לְאַבְתָּךְ אֲשֶׁר  
H853 H7998 H341 H834  
unto thyself and thou shalt eat even all the spoil of thine enemies

לְהָנְתָמָת־יְהָנָמָת־יְהָנָמָת־  
H430 H0 H0  
hath given which the LORD thy God

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 8:2** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

**Joshua 22:8** (Parallel theme): And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

**Numbers 31:9** (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

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