

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

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 (שָׁלַל, '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

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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

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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|--|---------------------------------|
| וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר רָכַשְׁתָּ וְכָל הַבְּהֵמָה וְהַטָּיִף וְנָשִׁים בְּקִי | |
| H7535 | But the women |
| H802 | and the little ones |
| H2945 | and the cattle |
| H3605 | |
| H834 | |
| H1961 | |
| לָקַחְתָּ וְתָבֹזָה וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂלַחְתָּ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| | |
| וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| H5892 | and all that is in the city |
| H3605 | even all the spoil |
| H7998 | thereof shalt thou take |
| H962 | |
| H0 | |
| וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂלַחְתָּ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| | |
| וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂלַחְתָּ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| H398 | unto thyself and thou shalt eat |
| H853 | even all the spoil |
| H7998 | of thine enemies |
| H341 | |
| וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| | |
| וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּקִי | |
| H5414 | hath given |
| H3068 | which the LORD |
| H430 | thy God |
| H0 | |

Additional Cross-References

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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