

Deuteronomy 34:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

Analysis

The south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—Vehanegev vехаKikkar (the Negev and the circle/plain) describes two regions: the arid southern wilderness and the lush Jordan valley. Jericho is called ir ha-temarim (city of palms), emphasizing its oasis fertility contrasted with surrounding desert. Jericho would be Israel's first conquest (Joshua 6)—Moses sees the very city his successor Joshua will soon destroy. The 'palm trees' evoke Eden-like abundance (Psalm 92:12), a foretaste of rest after wilderness wandering.

Unto Zoar—Zoar was the small city where Lot fled during Sodom's destruction (Genesis 19:22-23), located at the Dead Sea's southern end. By mentioning Zoar, God's vision encompasses Canaan's entire north-south axis. Moses's farewell vision thus brackets salvation history—from Sodom's judgment (Lot's refuge) to the conquest that will execute judgment on Canaanite wickedness, preparing for the King whose kingdom will have no end.

Historical Context

Jericho, situated near the Dead Sea in the Jordan Rift Valley, was a strategic fortress guarding the ascent into Canaan's central highlands. Archaeological evidence confirms ancient Jericho's impressive fortifications and palm-fed irrigation systems. Zoar's exact location is debated (southern Dead Sea shore), but its mention connects Moses's Nebo vision to Abrahamic history. The Dead Sea

region, though agriculturally limited, was Israel's eastern boundary—Moses sees the full breadth and depth of the inheritance.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between Negev wilderness and Jericho's palm-tree abundance illustrate the difference between wilderness wandering and promised rest?
2. What significance does Moses seeing Jericho—the first obstacle—hold for understanding that inheriting God's promises requires faith-driven conquest, not passive reception?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	הַנֶּגֶב	וְאֵת	הַפְּלָא	בְּקֶעֶת	יְרִיחוֹ	עַיִר
H853	And the south	H853	and the plain	of the valley	of Jericho	the city
	H5045		H3603	H1237	H3405	H5892
הַתְּמָרִים	עַד	צֹאֵר:				
of palm trees	H5704	unto Zoar				
H8558		H6820				

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 28:15 (Parallel theme): And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought

them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

Judges 1:16 (Parallel theme): And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

Judges 3:13 (Parallel theme): And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

Genesis 19:22 (Parallel theme): Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Genesis 14:2 (Parallel theme): That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.