

Joshua 10:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

Analysis

And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain—this first conquest following the miraculous victory establishes the pattern of herem (הֶרֶם), complete devotion to destruction. The phrase "with the edge of the sword" (lefi-charev, לְפִי־חֶרֶב, literally "by the mouth of the sword") personifies the weapon as devouring its victims, a common Hebrew idiom for total military annihilation.

Makkedah's significance lies not in its size but in its cave, where the five Amorite kings had hidden (10:16-27). Joshua's execution of these kings at Makkedah demonstrated that no refuge existed from God's judgment—neither caves nor fortresses could protect those devoted to destruction. The phrase hecharim (הֶחָרִים, "utterly destroyed") describes irrevocable consecration to God, whether for holy use or complete annihilation. When applied to Canaanites, it meant no spoil, no survivors, no treaty—only total eradication.

And he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho—this comparison links the southern campaign to the initial conquest, showing consistent application of God's commands. Both Jericho (6:21) and Makkedah

received identical treatment: total destruction with the king executed. This consistency demonstrated that God's justice operated by principle, not caprice—the same standards applied to first and last cities alike.

Historical Context

Makkedah's location remains uncertain, though most scholars place it in the Shephelah (lowlands) between the coastal plain and Judean hill country, possibly modern Khirbet el-Qom. The city's strategic importance lay in controlling access routes from the coast to the highlands. Archaeological surveys in the Shephelah region show numerous Late Bronze Age sites with destruction layers, though connecting specific sites to biblical Makkedah remains speculative.

The concept of herem warfare appears in various ancient Near Eastern contexts, including the Mesha Stele (c. 840 BCE), where the Moabite king Mesha dedicated captured Israelite cities to Chemosh. However, Israel's herem was unique in its theological motivation: not imperialistic expansion but divine judgment on Canaanite wickedness (Deuteronomy 9:4-5) and prevention of religious syncretism (Deuteronomy 7:1-6; 20:16-18). God delayed judgment 400 years until Amorite iniquity reached full measure (Genesis 15:16).

The cave where the five kings hid and were later executed became a memorial site (10:27), similar to the stone heap at Achan's execution (7:26). Such memorials preserved historical memory across generations, teaching covenant faithfulness and divine justice.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the unchanging application of God's judgment from Jericho to Makkedah demonstrate His consistent justice, and what does this reveal about His character?
2. What spiritual 'cities' or strongholds in your life need to face complete *herem*—total consecration to destruction rather than partial compromise?
3. How does the cave's failure to protect the five kings illustrate that no refuge exists from God's judgment apart from Christ?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּכּוּ הָהוּא	בַּיּוֹם	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	לָקַח	מִמַּקֵּדָה	וְאֵת
H1931	H3117	H3091	H3920	H4719	H853
and smote	And that day	Joshua	took	Makkedah	
וְהָרַס הֵם	לְמֶלֶךְ	וְאֵת	חֶרֶב	לְפִי	
H2763	H4428	H853	H2719	H6310	
thereof he utterly destroyed	and the king		of the sword	it with the edge	
לֹא	בָּהּ	אֲשֶׁר	הָיָה	כָּל	וְאֵת
H3808	H0	H834	H5315	H3605	H853
		them and all the souls			אותם
מִמַּקֵּדָה	לְמֶלֶךְ	עָשָׂה	שָׁרִיד	הַשָּׂא	יִר
H4719	H4428	H6213	H8300	H7604	
Makkedah	and the king	and he did	none remain	that were therein he let	
וְיֵרִיחוֹ	לְמֶלֶךְ	עָשָׂה	כַּאֲשֶׁר		
H3405	H4428	H6213	H834		
of Jericho	and the king	and he did	as		

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 6:21 (Word): And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

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