

Joshua 6:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Analysis

The herem (devoted to destruction) command—'And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live'—required total destruction except Rahab's family. The term 'accursed' (Hebrew herem) means devoted exclusively to God, requiring either consecration or destruction. Jericho's wealth went to God's treasury, not Israel's pockets. This demonstrates that holy war served divine judgment, not human profit. Rahab's exception shows mercy within judgment—grace rescues believers from deserved wrath.

Historical Context

The herem command appears throughout conquest narratives, requiring complete destruction of certain cities. This served multiple purposes: divine judgment on Canaanite sin (Deuteronomy 9:5), preventing idolatrous influence (Deuteronomy 7:1-5), and demonstrating that conquest served God's purposes, not mere land-grabbing. Modern readers struggle with these accounts, but understanding them as God's holy judgment on sinful nations (similar to Noah's flood) helps. Rahab's salvation demonstrates that even under judgment, God saves those who believe.

James 2:25 (Parallel theme): Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

Micah 4:13 (References Lord): Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

Hebrews 6:10 (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Hebrews 11:31 (Parallel theme): By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

1 Corinthians 2:7 (Parallel theme): But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Genesis 12:3 (Curse): And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Galatians 3:10 (Curse): For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Galatians 3:12 (Parallel theme): And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.