

Joshua 6:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Rahab's response—'According unto your words, so be it'—demonstrates complete submission to the terms of salvation. The Hebrew קְדֹבְרֵיכֶם קְנָהָוָה (kidivreikhem ken-hu) means literally 'as your words, so it is.' She doesn't negotiate terms, add conditions, or suggest modifications. This exemplifies saving faith: unconditional acceptance of God's provision on His terms. Her immediate action—'she bound the scarlet line in the window'—shows that genuine faith produces obedience. James 2:25 later cites Rahab as an example of faith demonstrated by works. The binding of the cord wasn't what saved her; rather, it evidenced the faith that saved. She sent the spies away safely, completing her covenant obligations before claiming covenant benefits. This sequence matters: Rahab helped the spies first (verses 15-16), then made covenant (verses 17-20), then placed the sign (verse 21). Faith acts before seeing fulfillment. She had no guarantee that Israel would succeed or remember their covenant—only the spies' word. Yet she acted decisively, publicly, irreversibly.

Historical Context

The phrase 'she sent them away' indicates Rahab dismissed the spies after understanding the covenant terms, likely late at night to avoid detection. The binding of the scarlet line immediately rather than waiting until Israel approached shows remarkable faith—she would live with this visible marker of covenant with Israel for days or weeks before Jericho fell, risking discovery by hostile neighbors.

Ancient city-states had sophisticated intelligence networks; a visible marker suggesting alliance with enemies could have resulted in Rahab's execution. Yet she prioritized obedience to the covenant over personal safety. The scarlet line hanging from her window became a public testimony, possibly leading to questions from neighbors or authorities. Rahab's courage in maintaining this visible faith-sign under potential persecution prefigures Christian witness under hostile circumstances—the cost of discipleship often includes social marginalization or danger.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Rahab's immediate obedience teach about the relationship between faith and works?
2. How does her willingness to display the scarlet cord despite potential consequences challenge your public witness?
3. In what areas might God be calling you to trust His word before seeing visible evidence of fulfillment?

Interlinear Text

מְאֹיֵשׁ	בָּעֵר יְמֹוֹ	אֲשֶׁר כָּל אֶת	בָּעֵר יְמֹוֹ	מְאֹיֵשׁ
both man	all that was in the city	all that was in the city	both man	both man
And they utterly destroyed	H853	H3605	H834	H5892
	H2763			H376
וְעַד	עַד	מִבְּעָר	עַד	וְעַד
and woman	young	and old	and ox	and ass
H5704	H802	H5704	H2205	H7716
				H2543
לְפִי	כִּרְבָּן			
with the edge	of the sword			
H6310	H2719			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 48:18 (Parallel theme): Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and he shall destroy thy strong holds.

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