

Joshua 6:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

Analysis

The phrase 'even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us' reports Canaanite psychological collapse. The Hebrew **חָמָס** (mug—to melt, faint, dissolve) indicates complete demoralization—not mere anxiety but absolute terror rendering them incapable of effective resistance. This fulfills God's promise: 'I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come' (Exodus 23:27). The conquest succeeds not through Israel's military superiority but through God-induced terror. This pattern repeats: 'the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth' (Genesis 9:2); 'the dread of thee shall be upon all the land' (Deuteronomy 2:25). God fights for Israel by supernatural means, breaking enemy will to resist. The phrase 'because of us' might suggest human causation, but context makes clear it's because of what God did through Israel (Red Sea, Amorite kings). This teaches that Christian witness carries supernatural power—not our eloquence but God's Spirit convicting the world (John 16:8). We are agents; God is actor.

Historical Context

Canaanite city-states existed in a fragile political equilibrium—Egyptian hegemony had weakened, leaving a power vacuum. The arrival of a unified, divinely-led Israel fundamentally destabilized this system. Canaanite religion centered on fertility deities (Baal, Asherah) who supposedly controlled nature and ensured prosperity. Israel's God demonstrated power over creation itself (Red Sea, Jordan River),

undermining confidence in Canaanite deities. The psychological impact was profound—if their gods couldn't protect them from Israel's God, why resist? This demoralization explains the rapid conquest of Canaan. Archaeological evidence shows many cities fell without prolonged sieges, consistent with defenders whose morale had collapsed. Rahab's testimony (2:11) that 'our hearts did melt' wasn't isolated—the entire region experienced this terror. God's strategy often includes psychological and spiritual warfare preceding physical conflict, ensuring victory belongs to Him.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that God goes before you in spiritual battles change your confidence?
2. What does the Canaanites' fear despite their fortifications teach about the limits of human security apart from God?
3. In what ways should believers rely on God's supernatural work rather than human methods in gospel advancement?

Interlinear Text

בְּ קַרְבָּהּ אֲשֶׁר יָכַל בָּאֵשׁ שְׁרֵפָה וּבְעֵיר
the city And they burnt with fire H3605 H834 H0 H7535

H5892 H8313 H784

וְכֹל שְׁתִּים וְכֹל שְׁתִּים
and all that was therein only the silver and the gold and the vessels of brass H3701 H2091 H3627 H5178

וְכֹל רָצֶן וְנִתְּנֶן וְנִתְּנֶן וְנִתְּנֶן
and of iron they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD H1270 H5414 H214 H1004 H3068

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 8:28 (Parallel theme): And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

Revelation 17:16 (Parallel theme): And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

2 Kings 25:9 (References Lord): And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

Revelation 18:8 (References Lord): Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Deuteronomy 13:16 (References Lord): And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again.