

Joshua 6:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

Analysis

Joshua adjured them (וַיִּשָּׁבַע, vayashba)—This solemn oath formula invoked God's name as witness and enforcer. **Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho**—Jericho's ruins were to remain a perpetual testimony to God's judgment, like Sodom (Deuteronomy 29:23). Rebuilding would defy divine decree.

He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates—This prophetic curse precisely fulfilled 500 years later when Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho, losing his sons Abiram and Segub (1 Kings 16:34). The Hebrew syntax suggests the sons' deaths would bracket the construction, which occurred exactly. This demonstrates Scripture's supernatural foreknowledge and the deadly seriousness of despising God's judgments.

Historical Context

Jericho remained ruins for approximately five centuries until Hiel's ill-fated rebuilding during Ahab's reign (874-853 BC). The site was used for temporary settlements but not fortified. This curse distinguished Jericho from other conquered cities like Ai, which were rebuilt. Joshua pronounced this oath circa 1406 BC, likely at the ruins before Israel's assembled tribes.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the curse's precise fulfillment centuries later teach about God's sovereign control over history and human choices?
2. How should believers today view 'rebuilding' what God has judged—returning to condemned sins or compromised ministries?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁבַע עַ	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עַ	בָּעֵת	הָיָא	לֵאמֹר	אֶרְוֹר	הָאִישׁ
adjured	And Joshua	them at that time	H1931	saying	Cursed	be the man
H7650	H3091	H6256		H559	H779	H376
לִפְנֵי י	יְהוָה	אֲשֶׁר	יָקוּם	וּבְנֶה	אֶת	הַזֹּאת
before	the LORD	H834	that riseth up	and buildeth	H853	this city
H6440	H3068		H6965	H1129		H5892
אֶת	יְרִיחוֹ	בְּכֹרֹו	יִסֵּד נָה	וּבְצֶעִיר	וְ	
H853	Jericho	thereof in his firstborn	he shall lay the foundation	and in his youngest		
	H3405	H1060	H3245	H6810		
יָצַב	דְּלָתֶיהָ:					
son shall he set up	the gates					
H5324	H1817					

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 16:34 (References Lord): In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof

in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

Acts 19:13 (References Lord): Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

Matthew 26:63 (Parallel theme): But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

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