

Joshua 8:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.

Analysis

The ambush strikes: 'And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.' The coordinated timing—Joshua's hand signal, immediate ambush response, rapid city capture—shows disciplined execution. The verb 'ran' (ruts, רץ) indicates speed and urgency. They don't delay but immediately exploit Ai's vulnerability. Setting the city on fire created visible signal to Joshua's forces that capture succeeded, triggering the planned counter-attack. The comprehensive success—entering, taking, burning—happened rapidly before Ai's pursuing forces could return. This demonstrates that God's strategies, when properly executed with faith and discipline, produce decisive victories. The passage illustrates that spiritual warfare success requires coordination, timing, and decisive action when God's moment arrives.

Historical Context

The hand signal mentioned (verse 18—Joshua's spear/javelin stretched toward Ai) provided visual communication across distances before modern technology. Ancient warfare relied on flags, fires, trumpet blasts, and physical gestures for battlefield coordination. The ambush force's immediate response to the signal shows they maintained vigilant watch despite hours of waiting. Their rapid movement ('ran') suggests they positioned close enough to reach the city quickly once Ai's defenders left. Setting the city on fire served dual purposes: destroying

the city as God commanded and signaling Joshua's main force. Smoke rising from Ai would be visible for miles, immediately communicating success. The speed of execution prevented Ai's forces from returning to defend their city. Ancient siege warfare typically favored defenders; Ai's abandonment of defensive positions through overconfident pursuit was fatal error. The victory demonstrates that faith, strategy, discipline, and timing combine in God's battles.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does coordinated timing (hand signal, immediate response, rapid execution) apply to spiritual warfare?
2. What does vigilant waiting (ambush force watching for signal) teach about preparedness for God's appointed moments?
3. When has decisive action at the right moment produced breakthrough in your spiritual battles?

Interlinear Text

וְהָאֹרֶב	קָם	מְהֵרָה	מִמְקוֹמוֹ	וַיָּרֻצוּ	
And the ambush	arose	quickly	out of their place	and they ran	
H693	H6965	H4120	H4725	H7323	
כַּנְטוֹת	יָדוֹ	וַיָּבֹאוּ	הָעִיר	וַיִּלְכְּדוּהָ	
as soon as he had stretched out	his hand	and they entered	into the city	and took	
H5186	H3027	H935	H5892	H3920	
וַיִּמְהַר	וַיַּצֵּתוּ	אֶת	הָעִיר	בָּאֵשׁ:	
it and hasted	and set	H853	into the city	on fire	
H4116	H3341		H5892	H784	

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