

Joshua 8:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.

Analysis

When Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai—The phrase 'made an end' (kalah, כָּלָה) means 'brought to completion/finished entirely,' indicating thorough execution of cherem (devoted destruction). Israel pursued fleeing enemies into **the wilderness**, ensuring none escaped to rally resistance or spread idolatry.

Until they were consumed—This verb echoes God's promise to 'consume' Canaan's inhabitants (Exodus 23:23; Deuteronomy 7:2). Modern readers recoil at such violence, yet these judgments picture God's holy wrath against sin—a wrath ultimately poured on Christ at Calvary. Ai's destruction warned surrounding nations while purging the land for God's dwelling. The sword prefigures final judgment when unrepentant sinners face divine justice (Revelation 19:15, 21).

Historical Context

The battle of Ai (circa 1406 BC) was Israel's second major conquest after Jericho. The complete destruction followed Deuteronomic warfare laws (Deuteronomy 20:16-18) requiring cherem against Canaanite cities to prevent religious

syncretism. Archaeological debates about Ai's location continue, though the biblical account's military detail suggests eyewitness testimony.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Canaan's judgment help us understand God's holy hatred of sin and the seriousness of rebellion?
2. In what ways does Christ's bearing divine wrath at the cross satisfy God's justice while offering mercy to repentant sinners?

Interlinear Text

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