

Joshua 8:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

Analysis

The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide—Hanging the king (תָּלָה, talah) after execution publicly displayed God's judgment on Canaanite leadership. However, **as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree** directly obeyed Deuteronomy 21:22-23: 'his body shall not remain all night upon the tree... (for he that is hanged is accursed of God).'

The **great heap of stones** (גָּלָה אֲבָנִים, gal-avanim) at the city gate created a permanent witness to God's victory, similar to Achan's memorial (7:26). Paul later applies this hanging curse to Christ: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree' (Galatians 3:13). The king of Ai's curse foreshadows Jesus bearing our curse.

Historical Context

Public display of executed enemies was common in ancient warfare (1 Samuel 31:10), but God's law required burial before nightfall to prevent land defilement. Joshua's careful observance—removing the body at sunset, not leaving it overnight

—shows meticulous covenant obedience even in victory. The stone heap at the gate served as a territorial marker and warning to other Canaanite cities.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Joshua's careful obedience to burial laws even for executed enemies demonstrate reverence for God's commands?
2. What does the king of Ai's curse prefigure about Christ's substitutionary death on the cross?
3. How do visible memorials to God's judgment serve as warnings and witnesses to future generations?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה	מִלְּאָמָר	בְּעֵץ	תִּלְתֶּל	עַל	בְּעֵץ	עַד	עַתָּה	עַד	וְאַתָּה
H853	And the king	of Ai	he hanged	H5921	from the tree	H5704	until eventide		
H4428		H5857	H8518		H6086				H6256
וְכֹבֵד	וְאַתָּה	בְּשָׁמֶן			צִוָּה	עַד			
H6153	was down	and as soon as the sun			commanded	Joshua	down		H853
H935		H8121			H6680	H3091	H3381		
נִבְלַת	מִן	בְּעֵץ	וְשָׁלַח	אֶל	אֹתָהּ	פְּתַח			
his carcase	H4480	from the tree	and cast	H853	H413	it at the entering			
H5038		H6086	H7993		H68	H6607			
שְׁעָר	יְרֵאָה	עַלְיוֹן	גָּל	אֶבֶן	מִם	עַד			
of the gate	of the city	and raise	H5921	heap	of stones	thereon a great			H5704
H8179	H5892	H6965		H1530	H68	H1419			
וְיַם									
תְּהִזֵּה									
that remaineth unto this day		H2088							
H3117									

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 7:26 (Resurrection): And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

2 Samuel 18:17 (Parallel theme): And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.