

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** (גִּלְאָבִים, 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

וְאֵת H853	מֶלֶךְ H4428	הָעִיר H5857	תָּלָה H8518	עַל H5921	הָעֵץ H6086	עַד H5704	עַתָּה H6256
	And the king	of Ai	he hanged	from the tree		until eventide	
אֶת H853	וַיִּרְדּוּ H3381	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ H3091	צִוָּה H6680	הַשָּׁמֶשׁ H8121	וַיִּכַּב H935	הָעֵר H6153	רֶב H5038
	down	Joshua	commanded	and as soon as the sun	was down		his carcass
פָּתַח H6607	אֶל H413	אוֹתָהּ H853	וַיִּשְׁלֵךְ H7993	הָעֵץ H6086	מִן H4480	נִבְלַת H5038	וְ H5038
	it at the entering		and cast	from the tree			
עַד H5704	גָּדוֹל H1419	אֲבָנֵי H68	גֵּל H1530	עָלָיו H5921	וַיִּקַּם H6965	הָעִיר H5892	שַׁעַר H8179
	thereon a great	of stones	heap		and raise	of the city	of the gate
הַזֶּה: H2088	הֵי H3117	וּמִן H3117	וְעַד H3117	וְעַד H3117	וְעַד H3117	וְעַד H3117	וְעַד H3117
	that remaineth unto this day						

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.