

Judges 20:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven.

Analysis

Verse 40 details the aftermath of Benjamin's defeat. But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, beh... The systematic destruction of Benjamin's territory represents the tragic outcome when civil war erupts among God's people—victory comes at devastating cost to the covenant community.

Historical Context

This verse describes the thorough nature of Benjamin's military defeat and the subsequent destruction of their tribal territory following the ambush strategy blessed by God after Israel's proper consultation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do victories that come after proper seeking of God still carry tragic costs?
2. What does this reveal about the consequences of civil conflict among God's people?
3. How can righteous judgments escalate beyond their proper scope?

Interlinear Text

וְהַמָּשָׁאָה	הָיָה לָהּ	עָלָה	מִן	הָעִיר	עִמּוּד
But when the flame	began	ascended up	H4480	of the city	with a pillar
H4864	H2490	H5927		H5892	H5982
עָשָׂן	וַיִּבֶן	בְּגִבְמָן	אַחֲרָיו	וַהֲרֹא	עָלָה
of smoke	looked	H1144	behind	H2009	ascended up
H6227	H6437		H310		H5927
כָּלִיל	הָעִיר	הַשָּׁמַיְמָה:			
them and behold the flame	of the city	to heaven			
H3632	H5892	H8064			

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 8:20 (Parallel theme): And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.