

Numbers 32:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD,
until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

Analysis

And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him—The phrase "all of you" (kol chalutz, כֹּל חָלוּץ) emphasizes universal participation—every able warrior must go, not just token representation. "Before the LORD" (lifnei YHWH, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה) transforms military service into worship and covenant obedience. They fight in God's presence, as His servants, for His purposes.

The condition "until he hath driven out his enemies" recognizes God as the true warrior who gives victory—they are instruments of His conquest. "His enemies" emphasizes that Canaan's inhabitants opposed God Himself by occupying His land and practicing abominations. Israel executes divine judgment, not merely pursuing territorial expansion. This verse makes their military obligation explicitly covenantal and theocentric. War becomes holy war, conducted before God's face, ceasing only when God completes His victory.

Historical Context

The concept of "before the LORD" echoes Israel's understanding of the Ark of the Covenant leading them in battle (Numbers 10:33-36). God's presence accompanied Israel's armies, making warfare a sacred activity requiring ritual purity and divine authorization. The conquest was seen as God's holy war against Canaanite abominations (Deuteronomy 20:16-18). Joshua's campaigns were thus

simultaneously military operations and acts of covenant obedience, with victories attributed directly to God's intervention (Joshua 10:10-11, 42).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does fighting "before the LORD" transform ordinary obligations into worship?
2. What does recognizing enemies as "His enemies" teach about spiritual warfare's true nature?
3. In what ways should Christians today understand their struggles as covenant service conducted in God's presence?

Interlinear Text

וְעָבַד	לְפָנָיו	כָּל	חַי וְצָר	אֶת	הַיַּרְדֵּי	מִפְנֵי	יְהוָה
And will go			all of you armed		Jordan	before	the LORD
H5674	H0	H3605	H2502	H853	H3383	H6440	H3068
עַד	הִדְרִישׁ	אֶת	אֹיְבָיו	מִפְנֵי			
	until he hath driven out		his enemies	before			
H5704	H3423	H853	H341	H6440			