

THE SPOILS OF WARFARE BAN

Jericho was the first city of the central campaign of the Conquest of the land of Canaan. It was important as a military strategy as well as psychological warfare (Josh.2:11; 5:1).

Jericho was considered an inheritance city with specific rules of the spoils of warfare ban (Deut.20:16-18). All the cities of the seven nations occupying the land of Canaan were considered inheritance cities. (Deut.7:1-2; Josh.3:10).

The ban, regarding the spoils of warfare was called cherem in Hebrew and anathema in Greek. The cherem involved the things devoted to the Lord. Some (cherem) things were to be destroyed because they were hostile to the Theocracy and other things were saved for sacred use.

At Jericho, both of these ideas were exercised: “And the city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.” (Josh.6:17)

We will examine our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

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| • Rules of the ban | (Josh.6:17-21, 24) | Spoils |
| • Rahab under the ban | (Josh.6:22-23, 25) | Spared |
| • Rebuilding under the ban | (Josh.6:26-27) | Sons |

This lesson will study SEVEN aspects of the Spoils of Warfare Ban.

1. “Cherem were hostile to theocracy to be either destroyed or in case of certain objects set aside to sacred use.” (Hebrew and English Lexicon, pg.356)

“They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it – men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.” (Josh.6:21, NIV)

The cherem ban might seem cruel to some on the basis of morality rather than on theology.

Human morality and goodness are not the same as God’s righteousness. They are self-righteousness – “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt.5:20)

Human morality doesn’t take into account for acts of evil within divine institutions that destroys individual’s alienable rights and freedoms.

2. Rahab the harlot was placed under the sacred side of the cherem ban.

“Only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.” (Josh.6:17)

She advanced God’s amazing gift of grace salvation in her life as a believer. “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom.5:1-2; 2 Pet.3:18)

She was one of four Gentile women to make the genealogy of Jesus Christ: “And to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse.” (Matt.1:5)

“By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.” (Heb.11:31)

3. All the precious metals of Jericho were placed under the sacred side of the cherem ban.

“But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.” (Josh.6:19)

“And they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.” (Josh.6:24)

4. A cherem curse was connected to violation of the ban.

“But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, lest you covet them and take some of the things under the ban, so you would make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.” (Josh.6:18)

We will learn next time that an Israelite by the name of Achan violated the cherem ban and brought divine discipline upon the camp (Josh.7:1, 11-12, 20-21).

Year's later King Saul violated this same cherem curse and suffered its consequences (1 Sam.15:1-3, 18-26).

5. An additional cherem curse was pronounced upon anyone rebuilding Jericho.

“Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.” (Josh.6:26)

Some 500 years later during the reign of King Ahab, a man named Hiel defied the cherem curse on Jericho and experienced its consequences (1 King 16:34).

6. Only the Lord can pronounce a cherem curse and carry through on its discipline.

We will look at three examples of the people who through negative volition used it improperly.

- Peter did it in his third denial of Jesus Christ (Matt.27:74).
- Forty Jews did it during their plot to assassinate Paul (Acts 23:12-23).
- Paul did it with an unhealthy attitude regarding Israel's volition towards grace salvation (Rom.9:1-3).

7. Just as there were specific doctrinal words to cycle for walking by faith in order for the walls of Jericho to fall (Heb.11:30), there were specific doctrinal words to cycle for fighting by faith in order to have complete victory over Jericho (1 John 5:4; Rom.4:21).

Hearing (Rom.10:17)

Completing (James 2:22)

Believing (Heb.4:2)

Applying (2 Cor.5:7)